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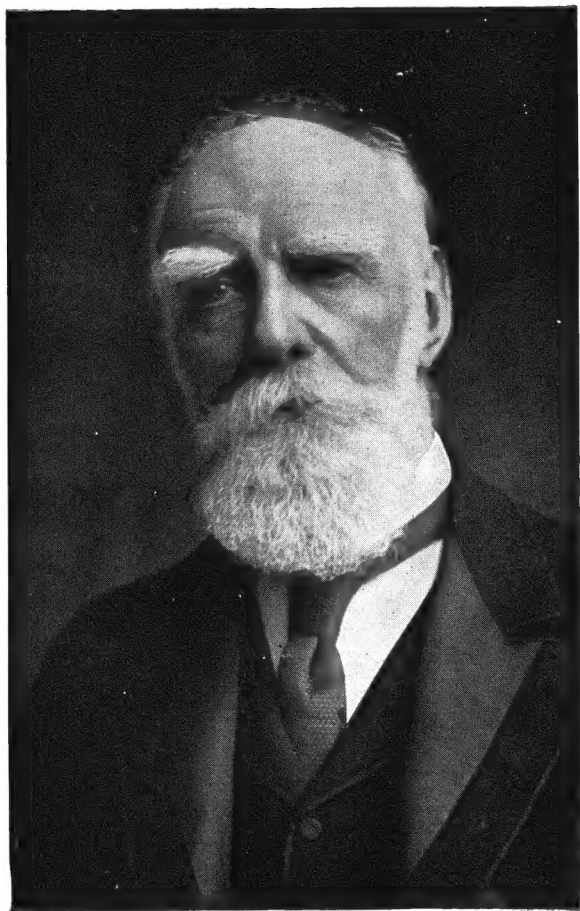
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THE LIFE
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Lord Strathcona

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CHAPTER I

HIS FAMILY CONNECTIONS

AMIDST the wild and majestic mountain scenery of British Columbia, on the Pacific side of the Dominion of Canada, there nestles a lake discovered by Simon Fraser early in the nineteenth century. The lake, and the stream which flows out of it to join the great river Fraser, have been given the name of Stuart, in honour of John Stuart, the heroic and capable companion of Simon Fraser in the series of explorations that helped to reveal the wonders of this fair, fertile, and grandly beautiful western extension of the British Empire.

Stuart Lake is fifty miles in length. It is dotted with islands and broken by beautiful recesses in the forests and mountains. Eastward are the snowy summits of the Rocky Mountains; north and south of it and to the west are mighty hills rolling back in endless tiers to the clouds. Dense forests of fir-trees and hemlocks cover the mountains to the water's edge. The scream of the eagle perched aloft, the roar of the waters swelling to a great chorus during mid-day sun,

fading to a long-drawn, sibilant hush during the cool of night, the souging of the winds through the great forests like the tide of a sea—only emphasise the solitude, the stillness, the utter loneliness of feeling that comes over man amid such wilderness grandeur. It is a region of shadowy moss—grown forests, of hazy summer air resinous with the odour of pines, of mountains rising sheer on each side in walls with belts of mist marking the cloud line, the white peaks opal and shimmering and fading in cloudland.

Simon Fraser and John Stuart knew and appreciated one another's worth; and soon after Fraser had given to the newly-discovered lake the name of Stuart, it was John Stuart who crossed the hills and brought back news of another inland water in the same country, which he called Fraser Lake as a tribute to the worth of his fellow-explorer.

Then the two friends followed the course of the noble stream—afterwards known as the Fraser—flowing amidst scenery of extraordinary beauty to the Pacific, which it joins a few miles below the flourishing town of New Westminster, the western terminus of the great Continental railway, the Canadian Pacific. The Fraser drains a country nearly as large as Italy, a land rich in minerals and containing some of the finest forests in the world.

John Stuart, a native of the Scottish county of Moray—now known as Elgin—belonged to a family among whose members were numbered some of the most eager and daring pioneers of British extension in the closing years of the

eighteenth century and the opening of the nineteenth. Stuarts and Smiths and Grants, with the eager impetus of their strenuous race, were farming and mining, trading and exploring in many a far-away region of the Empire; and all the countryside of the northern Scottish county had pride of clanship in the adventurous doings of their kinsmen.

Donald Alexander Smith—the future Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, and Lord High Commissioner of Canada—was a nephew of the John Stuart who had won both fame as an explorer and competence as a fur-trader. Donald's mother—sister of Stuart—treasured and read to her kinsfolk the letters sent to her by the brother from the wilds of North-West America; and the story of the deeds of the heroic kinsman would be proudly heard by the wide circle claiming him as its own.

But to no one did the magic of John Stuart's achievements appeal more than to the eager and imaginative nephew, Donald Smith; to his mind, the remote Stuart Lake, gemmed with islands and girt with mountain masses and primeval forests, appeared as an enchanted region; and when the time came for him to choose his career, the spell of his uncle's triumphs, both as an adventurer and as a fur-trader, drew him irresistibly to the mighty, illimitable West.

It should be added that John Stuart, after his journeys of exploration, became, during the boyhood of his nephew Donald, chief factor of the fur-trading station at Lesser Slave Lake, and on his retirement spent an honoured old age in his

native country. He died at Springfield House, Forres, Elginshire, in 1847, and by his own wish was buried in the tomb of his ancestors in the neighbouring village of Abernethy.

But we learn, on the authority of Mr Beckles Willson, that John Stuart was not the only fur-trader among Donald's kinsfolk. Robert, another of Donald's uncles, was also in the service of the North-West Company, and soon became celebrated for his courage and ability. His death was very tragic. One day, sailing down the Columbia River, his canoe was upset, and he and his three companions were flung into the water. A temporary refuge was furnished by a rock, but Stuart was the only swimmer of the four, and he was, therefore, the only one they could turn to for assistance. He bade them be of good cheer—that, if God permitted, he would save them. Then, taking one of them on his back, he struck out for the shore. His enterprise was successful, so far as the first and second man were concerned; but his further efforts to save the third man cost him his life. His strength had ebbed, and he and the companion he bore sank in the mighty rush of waters and were never heard of again.

In the exciting times—to be described in a later chapter—when the rivalry between the Hudson Bay Company and the North-West Company was at red heat, many of Donald's relations played important and stirring parts. To this fact Donald Smith bore witness some years afterwards when trying to appease an insurgent mob of half-breeds in North-West Canada.

'Though personally unknown to you,' he said, 'I am as much interested in the welfare of this country as others you know here. On both sides I have a number of relations in this land, not merely Scotch cousins, but blood relations. Hence, though I am myself a Scotchman, you will not be surprised that I should feel a deep personal interest in this great country and its inhabitants.'

A great country indeed, although at the time when Donald Smith entered it nothing more than a vast region of disconnected and fiercely-conflicting aims and interests. Now, thanks in a great measure to his sagacity, patience, and patriotism, the units composing the vast territory of British North America have become linked from the Atlantic to the Pacific into one mighty whole known as the Dominion of Canada; a region which contains all kinds of climates, all sorts of productions, every variety of mineral wealth, and almost limitless means of communication between its parts; a great social community that is advancing in civilisation by leaps and bounds, having before it a future whose possibilities only the most vivid imagination can attempt to forecast.

'Picture to yourselves,' says Lord Dufferin, 'a domain nearly as large as Europe, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, with its southern extremity in the same latitude as the south of France and its northern boundary along the shores of the Arctic Ocean. Possessing the finest forests in the world, widely-spread coal-fields, most extensive and productive fisheries,

watered by the most remarkable natural distribution of lakes and rivers, enriched with all varieties of minerals, and now known to possess an enormous area of fertile prairie lands destined to become the future granary of England—this vast country reaches, as the crow flies, from ocean to ocean, 4000 miles, with an area south of the latitude of St Petersburg of at least two million square miles capable of cultivation, of which fully one-half produces every crop that is known in Great Britain.'

It is over this enormous and fascinating territory that the genius and foresight of the humble Elginshire boy, Donald Smith—the Lord Strathcona who lately passed away—have left their beneficent and enduring impression.

CHAPTER II

HIS BOYHOOD

ALEXANDER SMITH, the father of Donald Alexander Smith (Lord Strathcona), was a fine example of the typical Highlander of Scotland—well built and tall, earnest in purpose and active in limb, ready alike to turn an unpromising moorland tract into a fertile farm, or to enter into that world of adventure in which many of his family had found a way to the advantage of themselves and the credit of the Empire.

But Alexander's destiny was not to be found as a pioneer in realms beyond the seas. The appeal of the world outside Elginshire had been irresistible to many of his kinsmen; as for instance in the neighbouring parish of Abernethy, of which the Rev Dr Forsyth has written,—'Our parish has continued to give some of its best blood to other lands. We have sent bankers to England, farmers to Ireland, and parsons to every county in the Highlands. We have sent settlers to Canada and the United States, shepherds to Fiji, stock-keepers to New Zealand, gold-diggers to Australia, diamond merchants to Africa, doctors to the Army and Navy, and soldiers to fight our cause in all parts of the world.'

Alexander Smith settled down as a merchant within the confines of his own county, and was happy in winning for his bride Miss Barbara Stuart of the Elginshire parish of Abernethy. Her family, who had held for over three centuries the manor of Lainchoil, formerly known as Leth-na-Coyle, had been highly respected far and wide as well for their own good qualities and unblemished traditions as for the good social position of their connections. The Grants, in whose honour Grantown was named, were among the kinsfolk of Miss Barbara Stuart, as was also Sir Archibald Grant who, half a century earlier, had founded the town of Archieston. The young merchant had made a choice which not only conduced to his life-long happiness, but strengthened his own position by an alliance with one of the most honoured and substantial families in all that countryside.

A few weeks after the wedding at Abernethy, Alexander Smith established his home in the romantically situated town of Forres, near to the mouth of the Findhorn, in the county of Elgin. Two sons were born to him. The elder was given the Christian name of John Stuart, after his mother's brother, the famous explorer; the second boy was Donald Alexander Smith—the subject of our biography—the successful fur-trader—the philanthropist whose heart was in the work of the social and religious well-being of the tens of thousands of scattered units in the ice- and snow-bound realms of northern Canada—the statesman who, as Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, linked his name with the

inception and fulfilment of a Canada forming one vast dominion from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the northern boundaries of the United States to the frozen solitudes of the Arctic shores.

The house where the future Lord Strathcona was born, August 6, 1820, was recently pulled down to make room for some local improvements. It adjoined the two-arched bridge spanning the swiftly flowing stream of the Mosset, which, mingling with the broader waters of the Findhorn, enters the estuary of Moray Firth. It was a plain structure of stone, mean in appearance and tenanted by lowly people, but large and substantial enough to have been formerly a suitable residence for a family of good local standing.

The pleasantly situated town of Forres, and the wild and barren heaths in the neighbourhood, have an abiding renown in the pages of Shakespeare. They supply many of the principal scenes in the tragedy of *Macbeth*, for it was on the sterile and desolate heath in the neighbourhood, known as the Hard Muir—still a ‘blasted heath,’ as described in the play—that Macbeth first met the ‘weird sisters,’ who with their greeting, ‘All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter,’ aroused the fearful ambition that led him to wade through blood to a throne and perdition :—

‘How far is’t call’d to Forres? What are these
So wither’d, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o’ the earth
And yet are on’t?’

On the western side of Forres is still shown the site of the royal palace where Macbeth, at the Coronation Banquet, drank to the health of the absent Banquo, and saw seated in a chair, vacant to all the rest of the company, the ghost of the comrade he had caused to be slain by hired assassins.

Lord Strathcona's native county of Elginshire is bounded on the north by Moray Firth and on the south by the picturesque mountain scenery of Inverness. Through the county flow three streams—the Spey, the Lossie, and the Findhorn—all prolific in salmon, and all remarkable for the romantic charm of their valleys; while, in the beautiful little lochs dotted over the pleasant region and forming the source of several streams tributary to the main rivers, trout of an excellent kind are abundant.

The future Lord High Commissioner for Canada received a sound rudimentary education in the local endowed school, founded in 1824 by the bounty of Jonathan Anderson, a native of Forres, who had given to the Magistrates and Town Council for the purpose some lands at Cowlairs, a district now included in the City of Glasgow. When Donald Smith had won distinction as one of the most honoured on the long roll of Britain's Empire builders, there were several of his school-fellows to bear witness to some of the boy's striking characteristics which time, as the story of his life will show, only deepened and strengthened. He is described as being 'of a shy, amiable disposition, but with a fund of sturdy resolution and even hardihood when occasion demanded it.'

The man's well-known sympathy with the troubles of his fellow-creatures had its foreshadowing so early as in his ninth year, when the country around Forres was devastated by a flood and several of the peasantry were drowned. Among those who lost their lives was one of little Donald's companions; and it is recorded that, on hearing the news, he went to tell the anguish-stricken parents, who were poor people, how sorry he was. 'With a gravity,' we are told, 'far beyond his years he condoled with them, and on leaving begged they would accept a slight token in memory of his friend. He then handed over all his pocket-money, amounting to a shilling and some odd coppers.'

Natives of Forres were justly proud—and are so still—of the link that connects their little town with Shakespeare's tragedy. Donald Smith's schoolmaster took care, in and out of school, to pose as the great local authority on the subject of *Macbeth*, and his daily declamations of the lines associated with Forres impressed his boyish auditors with an awe of the tragedy and an interest in their surroundings only excelled by the admiration they felt for their preceptor's elocutionary powers. Nor did the worthy man's literary reputation end here. His father was proud of having made the acquaintance of Dr Johnson during his Scottish itinerary, and was never weary of repeating anecdotes of the great man whom it had been his good fortune to meet. These reminiscences the Forres schoolmaster repeated over and over again to his pupils until they became as familiar with the sayings and doings of Dr Johnson as they

were with the majestic lines of the tragedy; and not infrequently confused the Swan of Avon with the Oracle of Fleet Street.

On one occasion when some of the elder boys were surveying the surrounding country from a neighbouring tower, the burliest of them all, with a mixed remembrance of his schoolmaster's literary disquisitions, pointed towards the site of the old palace and exclaimed, 'Why, that's the very place where Dr Johnson killed Banquo!' The speaker's prowess with his fists restrained the ridicule of all his companions with the exception of little Donald Smith, who, braving the consequences, laughed outright, and was forthwith challenged to a combat.

'Bring your brother to help you,' said the injured one scornfully, 'and I'll thrash both of you one-handed.'

Donald, without waiting for the coming of his brother, faced the challenger as firmly as in after days he did his opponents in the fur-trading camps and in the Canadian Legislature; and skins would have been bruised that day had not the joy of fight been dashed aside by the appearance of the schoolmaster.

CHAPTER III

A START IN LIFE

As the time drew near for Donald and his brother John to leave school and begin their career in life, anxious discussions went on in the Smith family as to choice of occupation for the two boys; and while the parents were discussing one plan after another the thoughts and aspirations of Donald were all in the direction of his uncle, John Stuart, or Stewart, the successful fur-trader and daring explorer, who was even then on his way home from the wilds of New Caledonia, where his name is linked on the maps, with a lake and a river which his eyes were the first to see.

To Donald's ardent mind there was a fascination not to be controlled in the glory of a life amidst the unconfined possibilities of the New World's wide and mighty expanse; but to the mother it seemed a pity that a boy, mentally endowed as Donald was, should start upon a career so rough, so far removed from the pales of civilisation, as that of a fur-trader. Domestic counsels prevailed for a time, and when the future Lord Strathcona left school, he made a sorrowful entrance into the office of the Town Clerk of

Forres. But his heart was not there; from the law books his mental gaze went to the snowy wastes, the illimitable forests, the vast lakes and rivers of British North America; the 'dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood' was not for Donald Smith.

When the boy left the Town Clerk's office his parents still longed for him to fix his mind on an ordinary business career within the limits of the British Islands; and, looking around them for an opening for Donald, they remembered that some wealthy and highly esteemed Manchester merchants named Grant were cousins of the Smith family, and to them the father wrote for advice in settling the lad's future.

These Grants, high-minded, generous, warm-hearted, have a very interesting association with literature, for Charles Dickens, in the early flush of his success, chanced to meet them during a visit to Manchester, and introduced them into his novel of *Nicholas Nickleby* under the name of 'The Cheeryble Brothers.' Lord Strathcona's grandmother was the sister of Mrs Grant, the mother of these delightful brothers; and what the mother was to the sons is set forth, as readers of *Nicholas Nickleby* will remember, in the description of the dinner given by the Cheerybles in honour of the birthday of Tim Linkenwater, their confidential clerk.

'Brother Charles,' said one Cheeryble to the other, 'my dear fellow, my dear fellow, there is another association connected with this day which must never be forgotten by you and me. This day, which brought into the world a most

faithful and excellent and exemplary fellow, took from it the kindest and very best of parents—the very best of parents to us both. I wish that she could have seen us both in our prosperity and shared it, and had the happiness of knowing how dearly we loved her in it, as we did when we were poor boys. My dear brother—*The Memory of our Mother.*'

To these Grants of Manchester Mr Smith wrote for advice concerning the future of his son Donald. Promptly the reply came that there was a vacancy in their office which the young man might fill, and that though the position was humble, there would be a prosperous course open to him if he had capacity and industry. Such an opening promised a wider outlook and greater opportunities than could be afforded by settling down in the narrow groove of a Town Clerk's office; and there is no doubt that it would have been eagerly accepted had not another outlook suddenly presented itself in the return home of John Stuart, the adventurous uncle whose career as a famous pioneer in the Far West shone like a guiding star in the skyey realms of young Donald's most ardent desires. He offered to use his influence in obtaining for his nephew a junior clerkship in the service of the Hudson Bay Company; and when there came official information that he had succeeded there was no happier boy in Forres than Donald Smith.

The future Lord Strathcona and High Commissioner for Canada was in his eighteenth year when he embarked from Scotland for the vast

region of the Canadas whose destiny his foresight, patriotism, and picturesque personality were to help in shaping to great and beneficent ends. Concerning this journey he wrote long afterwards,—‘When I went to Canada I took my first sea-voyage; and it is interesting, by way of comparison, that it took between forty and fifty days, and that the clipper ship in which I sailed, of 800 tons or thereabouts, was a considerable vessel in those days—the largest boat of this kind being about 1000 tons.’

The parting from his parents proved to be the final one. His father’s health gradually but surely declined, and twelve years after bidding farewell to Donald he died, Mrs Smith’s eyesight failed her about this time; but the darkness was cheered by the regular and frequent arrival of letters from the son whose greatness she did not live to see, but in whose capacity for gaining success she had unerring confidence. When Donald had made his way to honour and renown, there were many who remembered his mother’s oft-repeated words,—‘They’ll all be proud of my Donald yet.’

When Donald Smith arrived in Canada in 1837 it had not yet been federated into a Dominion. The Provinces now known as Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, were separate units in the vast domain of British North America. The almost limitless expanse west of Ontario, which includes Manitoba and the North-West Territories of British Columbia, was under the sway of the Hudson Bay Company, as was also

the desolate region, of which Labrador is a part, in the neighbourhood of Hudson Bay. Each Province regarded itself as a separate community, while almost the only inhabitants were the officers of the Company, the trappers, and the Indians. The population of this immense country, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the rivers and lakes of the south to the ice-bound Arctic shores, numbered less than one and a quarter millions.

In a lecture delivered by Lord Strathcona at Oxford, in 1899, some interesting particulars are given concerning the condition of the country in the first year of Queen Victoria's reign :—

'No one travelling through Ontario and the other Provinces to-day could imagine the state of things that existed in 1837. It seems almost incredible. Everything is made so easy for emigrants now—the travelling is comfortable, the journey is short, the food is better than many of them get at home.

'In 1837 the only incorporated city in Ontario was Toronto, which at that time had a population of from 13,000 to 14,000 people. In Lower Canada, Quebec at that time was a more important city than Montreal. It was at the head of navigation, as the shallows in Lake St Peter, on the St Lawrence, had not then been dredged, and it was the recipient of a greater share of the St Lawrence trade than it has now. A few ocean vessels of light draught went up to Montreal, but much of the merchandise for that city was transhipped at Quebec into other vessels.

'The social condition of the people was naturally

not of a high standard. Their work was hard, their mode of living simple, their houses large log-huts, and they had to go long distances to sell their produce and to buy new supplies. This, of course, refers largely to the country districts, or backwoods, as they were called in those days. In the towns and villages there was plenty of intercourse; and, judging from my own early experiences, life in the centres of population was pleasant and attractive, and the Canadians were as generous in their hospitality as they are known to be to-day.'

CHAPTER IV

EARLY EXPLORERS OF HUDSON BAY

HUDSON BAY, which has given its name to one of the most enterprising, successful, and romantic trading enterprises in the world's history, is so called from the famous explorer, Henry Hudson, who, in 1611, was—

The first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

His terrible fate was to find himself land-bound and ice-bound with a mutinous crew amidst surroundings of utter desolation, and to be cast adrift with his son into the despairful solitude of that bleak and cheerless region. Collier's famous picture represents him as gazing hopelessly seaward in a boat drifting to ruin among the icefields; but, although an expedition was sent from England in search of him, nothing was ever found, and 'a silence as of a grave in the sea rests over his fate.'

'For fifty years,' writes the American author of *The Conquest of the Great North-West*, 'the great inland sea, which Hudson had discovered, lay in a silence as of death. To the east of it lay a

vast peninsular territory—crumpled rocks scored and seamed by rolling rivers, cataracts, upland tarns—Labrador, in area the size of half a dozen European countries. To the south, the great Clay Belt of untracked, impenetrable forests stretched to the watershed of the St Lawrence, in area twice the size of modern Germany. West of Hudson Bay lay what is now known as the Great North-West—in area a second Russia.

‘A new era’—the middle of the seventeenth century—‘was now to open on the Bay—an era of wildwood runners tracking the snow-padded silences; of dare-devil gamesters of the wilderness sweeping down the forested waterways to midnight raid and ambushade and massacre on the Bay; of two great Powers—first France and England, then the Hudson Bay Fur Company and the Nor’-Westers—locked in death-grapple during a century for the prize of dominion over the immense unknown territory inland from the Bay.’

Hudson and other explorers of this illimitable and forbidding region were followed by men such as Radisson and d’Iberville, who struck inland; and their endeavours—intrepid knights of the wilderness as they have been aptly called—led the way to the supremacy gained by Great Britain over a territory as large as the whole of Europe.

‘The third era on Hudson Bay comes down to our own day. It marks the transition from savagery with semi-barbaric splendour, with all its virtues of out-door life and dashing bravery, and all its vices of unbridled freedom in a

EARLY EXPLORERS OF HUDSON BAY. 27

no-man's land with law of neither God nor man, to modern commerce; the transition from the Eskimo's canoe to latter-day Atlantic liners ploughing furrows over the main to the marts of commerce; and this period, too, is best typified in two commanding figures that stand out colossally from other actors on the Bay—Lord Selkirk, the young philanthropist, and Lord Strathcona, whose activities only began at an age when other men have either made or marred their careers. For three hundred years, the history of Hudson Bay and of all that region for which the name stands is really the history of these four men—Raddison, d'Iberville, Selkirk, and Strathcona.'

Several countries in succession strove for supremacy in Hudson Bay and the vast surrounding lands. A year or two after the tragic end of Henry Hudson's heroic enterprise the work of exploration in this region of desolation was taken up by the Danes who, before Columbus was born, had coasted the ice-fields from Iceland to Greenland and southwards to Nova Scotia and Rhode Island. King Christian IV. superintended the outfit of the expedition, and for commander was chosen Jens Munck, one of the most dashing adventurers in the romantic history of maritime enterprise. In 1619 the ships set sail, with the object of adding to Denmark a western dominion as great in extent as Russia.

Let Munck's own log-book tell the end of the terrible story :—

'January 23—This day died my mate, Hans Brock, who had been in bed five months. The

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COLLEGE SAINT-JEAN

priest sat up in his berth to preach the sermon, which was the last he ever gave on this earth.

'January 25—Had the small minute gun discharged in honour of my mate's burial, but so exceedingly brittle had the iron become from frost that the cannon exploded.

'February 16—Nothing but sickness and death. Only seven persons now in health to do the necessary work.

'February 17—Twenty persons have died.

'March 30—Sharp frost. Now begins my greatest misery. I am like a lonely wild bird, running to and fro waiting on the sick.

'April 1—Died my nephew, Eric Munck, and was buried in the same grave as my second mate. Not one of us is well enough to fetch water and fuel. Have begun to break up our small boats for fuel.

'April 14—Only four beside myself able to sit up and listen to the sermon for Good Friday, which I read.

'May 6—Died John Watson, my English mate. The bodies of the dead lie uncovered, because none of us has strength to bury them.'

In June, Munck was himself prostrated by illness. By his side the cook's boy lay dead. On the deck and in the steerage were the corpses of six others of the crew, 'for'—records the woe-stricken captain—'nobody had strength to throw them overboard.' With the exception of himself, only two survived, and these having crawled ashore at low tide were too weak to return. Fiction has never imagined a scene approaching the awfulness of the fate of these wretched

EARLY EXPLORERS OF HUDSON BAY 29

mariners, who had sailed from their native land in high spirits on a national enterprise, only to utterly fail and to die in despair and agony. After lying alone and without food for four days, Munck wrote the following, which he regarded as his last words,—

‘As I have now no more hope of life in this world, I request, for the sake of God, if any Christians should happen to come here, they will bury my poor body together with the others found, and this my journal forward to the King. . . . Herewith, good-night to all the world, and my soul to God.

‘JENS MUNCK.’

Rescue came soon afterwards from other vessels in the expedition, and the ship returned to Denmark with the tale of the great disaster. If Munck had succeeded there would never have been a British North America.

CHAPTER V

THE ORIGIN OF THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY

FRANCE was first in the field of enterprise in adding to her possessions a great trading dominion in North America, and her sons had been steadily pushing westward from the St Lawrence to the Great Lakes and the fertile plains beyond. Indeed, if her monarchs in the seventeenth century had not allowed their energies and patriotism to be undermined by the lassitude of luxury and vicious pleasures, the French flag to-day might be waving over the greater part of America.

In 1665 there returned to England Sir George Carterett, who had been sent across the Atlantic by the English Government to report upon the condition of affairs in the American plantations. He brought with him two Frenchmen—brothers-in-law—one named Medard Chouart de Groseillers, and described as a middle-aged man, heavily bearded, swarthy, weather-beaten; the other, clean-shaven, lithe, and energetic, Pierre Esprit Radisson by name, with a dash in his manners that was a cut between the courtier and the wilderness runner. Their fame as successful traders and daring pioneers had already reached England, and many a quiet merchant at home had grown

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envious at the news that in a single journey from Hudson Bay to Quebec, the two brought 600,000 beaver skins worth close upon £200,000 in modern money.

Directly they reached England, the news spread that they had a most wonderful story to tell. The French Governor had robbed them and driven them from Quebec to Cape Breton, where, by their fellow-countrymen, they had been treated with such indignity that they counted themselves happy in escaping with their lives to Nova Scotia.

'In vain,' says the historian of the *Conquest of the Great North-West*, 'they had appealed to France for justice. The robber governor was all powerful at the French Court, and the two explorers—penniless nobodies pitting their power against the influence of wealth and nobility—were dismissed from the Court with a joke. They had been promised a vessel to make further explorations in the North, but when they came to Île Percé, south of Anticosti, to await the vessel, a Jesuit was sent to them with word that the promise had been a put-off to rid the Court of troublesome suitors—in a word, a perfidious joke.'

The two Frenchmen chanced to meet Sir George Carterett in America, and when he heard their story he asked them to accompany him to England, an invitation which they, burning with indignation and resentment at the wrongs they had endured from their own country, eagerly accepted. Charles II. was at Oxford, whither he had fled to be out of reach of the Great Plague

which was ravaging London; and as he listened to Radisson's story of the 600,000 beaver skins his thoughts went to his exchequer, woefully empty through the ravages of the fire, the plague, and the Dutch wars; but it is only fair to add that the imagination both of himself and his courtiers was kindled by the romantic narrative of the eloquent Frenchman.

Listen to a part of the entrancing story that captivated King Charles at Oxford :—

'We were in danger to perish a thousand times from the ice runs,' said Radisson, describing a journey up the Ottawa and overland to Lake Superior, and away northwards by canoe to Hudson Bay. 'We came to the far end at night. It was thick forest, and dark, and we knew not where to go. We launched our canoes on the current and came full sail on a deep bay, where we perceived smoke and tents. Many boats rush to meet us. We are received with joy by the Crees (Indians of that locality). They suffer us not to tread the ground, but carry us like hens in a basket to their tents. We left them with all possible haste to follow the great river and came to the seaside. The Indians tell us peculiarities of the Europeans whom they have seen there. We went from isle to isle all summer. We went along the bay to see the place the Indians pass the summer. We left in the place our mark and rendezvous. We passed the summer coasting the seashore of that vast country. We followed another river back to the Upper Lake (Lake Superior), and it was midwinter before we joined

the company at our fort to the north of Lake Superior.'

King Charles and his Ministers saw that infinite possibilities were suggested by the fascinating stories related by the Frenchmen, and great consideration was shown to these penniless soldiers of fortune. Presents were made to them, and a weekly sum granted for their maintenance, on condition that they kept within touch of the royal circle. But among all at Court they found no friend more enthusiastic than the impulsive and daring Prince Rupert, who advocated their suggestions fervently and unceasingly from the first.

At last—in a letter still in existence—the King directed James, Duke of York, head of the Royal Navy, to grant to the two adventurers the ship *Eaglet* for the purpose of carrying on trade in Hudson Bay, and—a secondary consideration, of course, to a monarch in need of money—continuing their explorations of a new route by water to the Pacific. A second ship, the *Nonsuch*, was chartered, and the expense of manning and victualling both vessels was borne by Prince Rupert and his friends. All who contributed to the funds were made partners in the venture, although no company had as yet been formerly established.

When the ships were ready to start from Gravesend, the following written commission was given to the captains :—

'You are to saile with the first wind that presents, keeping company with each other to the place of rendezvous. You are to saile to such place

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as Mr Gooseberry (Groseillers) and Mr Radisson shall direct to trade with the Indians there, delivering the goods you carry in small parcells no more than fifty pounds worth at a time out of each ship, the furs in exchange to stowe in each shipp before delivering out any more goods, according to the particular advice of Mr Gooseberry and Mr Radisson.'

Then follows a paragraph revealing the shady side of European business transactions with the native races in America—for the word in italics is but a cryptogram for spirituous drink,—

'You are to take notice that the *Nampumpeage* which you carry with you is part of our joynt cargoes wee having bought it for money for Mr Gooseberry and Mr Raddison to be delivered by small quantities with like caution as the other goods.'

Yet the terms of the commission close with a supplication for a blessing from the 'Giver of all good things,'—

'Lastly, we advise and require you to use the said Mr Gooseberry and Mr Radisson with all manner of civility and courtesy, and to take care that all your company doe bear a particular respect unto them, they being the persons upon whose credit wee have undertaken this expedition.

'Which we beseech Almighty God to prosper.'

Thus started from England the Gentlemen Adventurers to Hudson Bay, eager only for wealth and all unknowing that they were to become

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instruments in founding an extension of the British Empire nearly as great as the whole of Europe.

The next noteworthy step was the founding of the Hudson Bay Company on legal business lines, and the granting of a Charter.

'In itself,' writes the well-informed chronicler of these transactions, 'the charter is the purest piece of feudalism ever perpetrated in America. . . . It was practically deeding away half America—namely, all of modern Canada except New France, and the most part of the Western States beyond the Mississippi. . . . The charter was purely a royal favour, depending on that idea of the Stuarts that the earth was not the Lord's, but the Stuarts', to be disposed of as they wished.'

The charter, which certifies the official name of the great trading enterprise as 'The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading with Hudson Bay,' and names Prince Rupert as first Governor, runs as follows :—

'Whereas, these have at their own great cost and charges undertaken an expedition for Hudson Bay for the discovery of a new passage to the South Sea and for trade, and have humbly besought us to incorporate them and grant unto them and their successors the whole trade and commerce of all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, creeks, and sounds in whatsoever latitude, that lie within the entrance of the straits called Hudson Straits, together with all the lands, countries, and territories upon the coasts and confines of the seas, straits,

bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds not now actually possessed by the subjects of any other Christian State, know ye that we have given, granted, ratified, and confirmed the said grant.'

When Bilboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and, looking towards the Pacific, claimed for Spain all the world 'from the Pole Arctic to the Pole Antarctic,' he was bombastic; but in the claim of this Charter there was a business-like intent of astonishing, grasping seriousness. After granting to the newly created company the right to construct forts and use firearms, to make laws and inflict penalties, the Charter continues,—'Furthermore of our ample and abundant grace we have granted not only the whole, entire, and only liberty of trade to and from the territories aforesaid, but also the whole and entire trade to and from all Havens, Bays, Creeks, Rivers, Lakes, and Seas into which they shall find entrance by water or land out of the territories aforesaid.'

Without the Company's consent no one outside its pale was allowed to live in the country included in the wide terms of the Charter; and, most strange of all, the Company had power to make war against any 'Prince or people whatsoever that are not Christians,' if such warfare should be for the benefit of the Company and its trade.

On terms so high-handed and royal as these had King Charles made a gift to his friends of the greater part of a continent which was not his to give.

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It was in the service of this Company, with its dominion extending over an area scarcely less than the whole of Europe, with its almost despotic power, its wealth, its trading energy, and its influence, that Donald Smith began the great and unsullied career which placed his name as Lord Strathcona in golden characters on the honour roll of Empire.

CHAPTER VI

HOW DONALD SMITH BEGAN HIS CAREER

WHEN Donald Smith reached Montreal, the rebellion begun in 1837 by certain disaffected Frenchmen, led by Louis J. Papineau, had just been quelled; but trouble was still brewing in Upper and Lower Canada, as the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec were then called. Papineau and his followers had openly avowed their intention of establishing a Republic on the banks of the St Lawrence, *une nation Canadienne*, and at their public meetings proclaimed themselves as 'Sons of Liberty' and Patriots; but, happily, the numbers of French Canadians ready to revolt against British ascendancy in Canada were in the minority; and the Roman Catholic clergy were foremost in protesting against the dangerous and seditious utterances of the rebels. The outbreak, with its consequent bloodshed, was an unfortunate episode in Canada's history; but it was firmly faced, and through the clemency and wisdom of the authorities the two races approached nearer to union than at any previous period of Canadian history.

These events interested Donald Smith; but not for many years to come would it be his lot to figure

in the crowded haunts of men and take a share in their political aspirations and strivings. His lot was cast with the great fur-trading Company, and through a long period of loneliness and hardships his manhood's grit was to be tested in ordeals of endurance against storm and flood and Arctic bitterness.

R. M. Ballantyne, in his story of *The Young Fur-Traders*, has graphically pictured the country under the sway of the Hudson Bay Company. 'Imagine,' he writes, 'an immense extent of country, many hundreds of miles broad, and many hundred miles long, covered with dense forests, expanded lakes, broad rivers, wide prairies, swamps, and mighty mountains, and all in a state of primeval simplicity—undefaced by the axe of civilised man, and untenanted by aught save by great roving hordes of Red Indians and myriads of wild animals. Imagine amidst this wilderness a number of small squares, each enclosing half a dozen wooden houses and about a dozen men, and between each of these establishments a space of forest varying from fifty to three hundred miles in length, and you will have a pretty good idea of the Hudson Bay Company's Territories, and of the number of and distance between their forts.

'The idea, however, may be still more correctly obtained by imagining populous Great Britain converted into a wilderness and planted in the middle of Rupert's Land. The Company in that case would build *three* forts in it—one at the Land's End, one in Wales, and one in the Highlands—so that in Britain there would be but three hamlets

with a population of some thirty men, half a dozen women, and a few children! The Company's posts extend, with these intervals between, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and from within the Arctic Circle to the northern boundaries of the United States.'

The Governor of the Company at the time of Donald Smith's arrival in Canada was Sir George Simpson, who, from a clerkship in the London office of the Company had risen to the position of supreme command, and was popularly known as the 'King of the Fur Trade,' and the 'Emperor of the Plains.' His sway was on the lines of the uncontrolled power conferred upon the Governor by the terms of the Company's Charter, and his manner was as peremptory as his power was great. Born to command, eager and alert in all his doings, his influence was great from one end to the other of the vast territory; and Donald Smith, knowing something by report of the man he was to serve, waited upon the magnate at his residence near Montreal with pardonable awe.

The Company had recently established a trading centre at Labrador, and to this region, described as 'the bleakest corner of the earth,' the young man was sent. Although their Charter gave them rights over the surroundings of Hudson Bay, it was not until 1831 that the Company extended their enterprise to the great peninsula of Labrador. In that year, we are informed, in Mr T. Grenfell's admirable description of Labrador and its people, the Company learned from a missionary report that supplies of excellent furs were to be obtained

from the neighbourhood of Ungava Bay, a wide inlet south of Hudson Strait, in the north of the Labrador peninsula. There they established Fort Chimo as a trading centre, a place that figures largely in the fur-trade history, owing to the narrative entitled *Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Service in the Hudson Bay Territories*, written by John M'Lean, factor at Fort Chimo, when Donald Smith was appointed to serve in Labrador.

The appearance of the country where Donald Smith began his Canadian career may be described in M'Lean's own words :—'The navigation of the coast is exceedingly dangerous from the continual pressure of ice and the extraordinary force of the currents. While the coast proved so inaccessible, the interior of the country wears a still more dreary and sterile aspect; not a tree, nor shrub, nor plant of any kind is to be seen, save a few willows and the lichens that cover the rocks.'

In Labrador, Nature is supreme in her loneliness. The coast-line forms a succession for more than three thousand miles of bare cliffs and headlands, now cold and repellant in the sunlight, now looming heavily out of the fogs; and past them stately processions of icebergs move steadily southwards. Startling in their savage, desolate aspect, yet under some conditions of light charming in their mossy mantle of colour, are the wild and bleak table-lands uplifted on a barren wilderness of hills, and stretching for hundreds of miles into a bleak region appalling in its intense loneliness and silence.

Amidst surroundings such as these—remote, barren, desolate, cheerless—seeing little of human life save the native Eskimos, cut off for months at a time from communication with friends and news of the world's doings, Donald Smith began his career in the service of the Hudson Bay Company. With the Eskimo and other tribes, and with the half-breeds, he and his associates in trade would barter ammunition and tobacco, coloured handkerchiefs and cloths, and other commodities, for furs, deer-skins, and parchments, and in the fishing seasons for salted cod and salmon.

Journeys on foot or by canoe, under the rays of a broiling sun with mosquitoes at their best, or worst; pathless wastes of snow and ice to be traversed by dog sled; visits paid to Indian camps to create trade or to increase it where it already existed. Such incidents made up the regular life of the traders in this far distant portion of the Company's territory.

If the natives did not come to the traders, the traders would have to search for the natives; and from the many centres of the Company, such as Fort Chimo, in the north of Labrador, where Donald Smith began his work, orders were issued, plans settled, negotiations made, and goods exported. The work called for business acumen, industry, foresight, energy, patience, and physical powers of endurance; qualities which were the characteristics of the future Lord Strathcona throughout his career.

The young man who was to become Governor of the Company made his appearance at the

Labrador trading station in 1838; and concerning his arrival at Fort Chimo the following note was made by M'Lean, the factor:—
'In September I was gratified by the arrival of despatches from Canada by a young clerk appointed to the district. By him we received the first intelligence of the stirring events that had taken place in the colonies during the preceding year.'

CHAPTER VII

LIFE AT HAMILTON INLET

FOR thirteen years Donald Smith was stationed in Labrador, first at Fort Chimo, in the icy north of the peninsula, and later on in the south-eastern corner of Labrador, at Hamilton Inlet, where Lake Melville, after receiving the waters of several important rivers, such as the North-West River and Hamilton River, contracts into a narrow strait before joining the neighbouring Atlantic.

Of the many fiords along the Atlantic shores of Labrador the most important and interesting is Hamilton Inlet, a graphic description of which has been given by Dr A. P. Low, Deputy Minister of Mines in Canada, in the volume on *Labrador*, edited by Dr W. T. Grenfell. From this eye-witness of the life and scenery of the district we learn that the deep inlet is broken by large, bold, rocky islands, and fringed by hills which in places rise sheer from the water to a height of a thousand feet. The lower slopes and the islands are wooded with dark spruce mingled with the lighter-coloured birch and aspen, forming a pleasing contrast with the bare rocks of the summits. The whole length of the inlet is about one hundred and fifty miles,

and while the average breadth is about fifteen miles the inlet narrows to the width of a mile at the Hudson Bay Company's station at Rigolet, where Donald Smith was located for many years.

An Eskimo village, consisting of a cluster of small log huts, occupied the shores of a little bay at the upper end, and was interesting as being the most southerly community of these people. The inhabitants had lost much of their native fascination through years of close association with white men; and, in that their acquirement of some of the virtues of civilisation had been followed by a knowledge and practice of its accompanying evils, the change was not altogether for good.

In addition to the Hudson Bay station at Rigolet there is another one hundred miles higher up the inlet, at the mouth of North-West River. It is not so important now as in former years when it contained the residence of the Chief Factor in charge of Labrador. The falling away from prosperity is due to the abandonment by the Company in the seventies of some inland trading posts, and to the Indians having chosen to carry their furs to the posts along the banks of the St Lawrence rather than to the North-West station.

Scattered along the shores of Hamilton Inlet are the little winter houses of a number of white people who spend their summer in catching fish by the Atlantic shores, and their winter in hunting. These planters, as they are called, are very poor, and pursue their daily tasks without

hope and without ambition to better their conditions; yet, as Dr Low, with his intimate knowledge of the people, tells us—'Although the yearly round of the planter may not appeal to many, it is a much better and freer life than is the lot of the poor in civilisation, with its monotonous daily grind for a mere subsistence.'

'Their life,' continues Dr Low, 'is fairly happy and close to nature. The sea supplies fish freely; their gardens, potatoes. From the proceeds of their summer's cod-fishing and winter's fur hunt, they obtain food and clothing, together with a few luxuries. Early in the summer they leave their houses on the inlet for the outer coast, where they engage in the cod-fishing, usually with nets and gear provided by some Newfoundland fishing firm. . . . At the close of the cod-fishing they return to their houses on the inlet, stopping on the way at the Hudson Bay posts, where they receive advances of provisions and clothing to be charged against their coming winter's hunt. Arriving home, they dig their potatoes and catch and freeze trout, which swarm at the mouths of all the streams at this season. As soon as sufficient snow falls, they set their traps for marten, fox, otter, lynx, and other fur-bearing animals.

'With the advent of spring, the skins get out of condition, and the fur path is abandoned for the seal-hunt. These animals are killed by shooting them on the ice, where they come up through cracks and holes to bask in the sun. Later, when the ice leaves, they are caught in heavy nets. By the time the seal-hunt is over, the garden dug, and

potatoes planted, the turn comes to go to the outer coast for the cod-fishing.'

The Eskimos, with whom Donald Smith was in almost daily communication during his life in Labrador, form one of the most interesting aboriginal races. Their leading physical peculiarities are a stunted stature, flattened nose, projecting cheek-bones, eyes often oblique, and yellow and brownish skin. The dress of the men consists chiefly of a coat of seal-skins, which reaches to the knee, that of the women differing from it in only a few minute points. Other furs and reindeer skins are also used as material for dress, according to the seasons. In summer they live in tents covered with deer-skins; while in winter their dwellings are houses usually sunk several feet in the ground. The most valuable possessions of these people are their boat and sledge. They are a quick-witted race with considerable aptitude for instruction, lovers of home, country, and freedom, and of a kind and hospitable disposition.

'Almost without exception,' says an authority, 'the Eskimo can read and write. Many can play musical instruments, share in part-singing, and are well able to keep accounts, and know the value of things. These accomplishments, entirely and solely due to the Moravian missionaries, have largely helped them to hold their own in trade, a faculty for want of which almost every aboriginal race is apt to suffer so severely.

'I have known an Eskimo called in to read and to write a letter for a Newfoundland fisherman, and I have had more than once to ask one to help me by playing our own harmonium for us at a service,

because not one of a large audience could do so. I have heard more than one Eskimo stand up and deliver an excellent impromptu speech.'

Of all the fur-trading centres in which Donald Smith was interested by far the most pleasant was the North-West River Station, ninety miles higher up Hamilton Inlet than the Rigolet centre. The fertility of the surrounding country and the comparative mildness of the temperature enabled a plentiful supply of vegetables to be grown, enough not only for local needs but for less favourably situated stations at a distance. With its well-wooded background and grassy levels, and its position at the mouth of a fine river prolific in salmon and trout, it stood out in refreshing contrast with the general bareness, sterility, and bleakness characteristic of scenery in Labrador.

During the long and severe winter the need of endurance on the part of the fur-trader was most in evidence; and on more than one occasion Donald Smith was in peril of his life. Those acquainted with him during this period have told of his many privations and dangers when journeying at winter-time across the tempest-swept Labrador wilds; and that he survived when others perished amidst the fearful climatic conditions seems to be entirely owing to his foresight—one of Lord Strathcona's never-failing characteristics—in never attempting a journey, however favourable the weather when he started, without a supply of extra clothing and provisions as a safeguard against emergencies.

The journeys made in the winter months for the

purpose of buying furs were generally by sledges drawn by dogs. The Rigolet dog-teams were famous far and wide in Labrador for the perfection with which they were driven. Perhaps the greatest of all sledge-driving achievements are those connected with the celebrated Ford family, who carried the mail three hundred and fifty miles each way twice during the Labrador winter, over barren, uninhabited shores where no man lived and no houses stood in which to shelter—across mountain fastnesses, over glaciated passes, and the still more dangerous sea-ice, year after year, without serious accident.

‘The life of a Hudson Bay factor in Labrador,’ writes an authority on the subject, ‘does not offer all the joys of civilisation, but it offers a field to develop courage, muscle, resourcefulness, and self-reliance, to an eminent degree. It makes men who shoot straight, fear nothing and live hard. It offers the simple life, with its many advantages, and it breeds a hospitality, a brotherliness to one’s kind, a readiness to stand by any one in distress, that, in our complex life in cities and even villages we rarely find ourselves called on to exercise. Never has a visitor travelled our coast, but his heart has gone out equally to all the brave men of these two great organisations, the Moravian Missions and the Hudson Bay Company.’

During the thirteen years of his early life which the future Lord Strathcona spent in Labrador, he became deeply impressed with the value of the work done among the Eskimos by the influence of the Moravian Missions. Formerly the most savage race of people on the whole Continent of

America, the Eskimos became so changed under the influence of the Moravian missionaries that to-day, says one who knows them well, it would be hard to find a more quiet, placid, and peaceable people. A race of primeval savages, with whom murder was a passion and theft a craze, have become mild and simple Christians. The great miracle has seldom been wrought on more uncompromising materials and with more amazing success.

Hand in hand with the evangelising efforts of these devoted Moravian missionaries went their care for the social welfare of the Eskimos; and, from the day he entered Labrador to the time when he became Canadian High Commissioner, Lord Strathcona took an earnest and practical interest in the work of the Mission. What he did to further the efforts of the missionaries will never be fully known, but the following brief table provided by Dr W. T. Grenfell in his book, *Labrador*, throws some light on one aspect of Donald Smith's practical philanthropy :—

1892.—The hospital ship *Albert* sailed from England with one doctor in charge. He spent three months on the Labrador coast, holding services, and treating nine hundred sick folk. A large amount of clothing and reading matter was distributed.

1895.—The hospital ship was replaced by the steamer *Sir Donald*, the gift of Sir Donald A. Smith, who had lived many years in Labrador. Nineteen hundred sick folk received treatment.

1896.—The *Sir Donald* was carried out from her

harbour by the winter ice, and found far at sea, still frozen in, by the seal-hunters. She had to be sold.

1899.—Largely through the munificence of the Mission's staunch friend, Lord Strathcona, the steel hospital steamer *Strathcona* was built at Dartmouth, England, fitted with every available modern appliance, and sent out to help in the work of the Moravian Mission.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE COMPANY'S SERVICE

THE peninsula of Labrador, described as the bleakest corner of the earth, whither Donald Smith was sent by Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson Bay Company's vast domain, was the scene of the Company's most recent extension of the fur trade enterprise. The trading possibilities of that most desolate region had been pointed out in a pamphlet issued by the Moravian missionaries, in which after a statement concerning the condition of the Eskimos, reference was made to the fur-bearing animals abounding there, such as the fox, mink, and marten.

Ever eager to widen their sphere of trade, the Company, inspired by the audacious spirit of their ancient Charter, placed Labrador within the bounds of their territories in 1831, seven years before Donald Smith arrived in Canada. There they established the several posts referred to in our last chapter. Only by slow degrees, and patient efforts under most trying climatic conditions, was a fair amount of success won, although the hardest in the Company's service were sent into the new field.

Accustomed even as these men were to severe toil and privation, they sent back to headquarters dispiriting reports of the bitterly cold weather, the scourging tempests, and the difficulty of obtaining provisions in that wilderness of deep snow. But the Governor persevered in spite of objections offered by leading partners in the Company, and in time his enterprise and pertinacity of purpose were rewarded. Sir George Simpson proved himself to be a good judge of character when, on seeing Donald Smith for the first time in 1838, he forthwith sent him out in the Company's name to Labrador's dismal, bleak, and inhospitable shores.

Remote and dreary as the surroundings were, there was, as every man who has been in the employ of the Company will testify, a fascination in the life. This can be understood so far as the natives are concerned, for they have inherited the liking. But the clerks, as people in Donald Smith's position were styled when they entered the Company's service, were mainly men of ability and good origin, well fitted to occupy responsible positions. However, it has generally been found from the outset that they become enamoured of the trader's life, as soldiers and sailors usually do of theirs. They retire from it reluctantly, and some, having gone back to Europe, have begged leave to return.

The Company has always been managed upon something like a military basis. Perhaps the original necessity for forts and men trained in the use of arms suggested this. The lowest rank in the service is that of the labourer, who may

happen to fish or hunt at times, but is employed—or enlisted, as the term is, for a number of years—to cut wood, shovel snow, act as a porter or gardener, and do general work about the post.

Sharply separated from the labourers were the Company's 'gentlemen' as they were known in Labrador and elsewhere through the dominions of the Company, and as a 'gentleman' Donald Smith began his career. They were the commissioned officers of the service in contradistinction to the non-commissioned class of labourers.

The so-called 'gentleman' began as a 'prentice clerk, as Donald Smith did, and after a few years became a clerk. His next elevation would be to the rank of a junior chief trader, and so on through the grades of factor and chief factor, to the office of Chief Commissioner, or Resident Manager, chosen by the London Board and having full powers delegated to him. Although styled a 'clerk' it is possible he may never have to touch a pen in the Company's business, and may have to act only as a trader throughout his career. His formal commission of appointment brings with it a guarantee of employment and salary, and an assurance of extra income based on the profits of the fur trade. Promotion comes only through the Chief Commissioner, and it has always been the rule to make fitness rather than seniority the standpoint for selection.

It was from the position of a 'prentice clerk, the lowest in rank of the Company's commissioned offices, that Donald Smith made his way to the highest post. As we have seen, he was so unfortunate

as to be sent, immediately on reaching Canada, to the coast of Labrador, where a man is as much out of the world and of contact with the heart of the Company as it is possible to be. The military system was well illustrated in that summary posting off of the young man to the most cheerless and remote of the Company's posts; but every man who accepts a commission engages to hold himself in readiness to go, with at any rate outward cheerfulness, to the North Pole if directed.

Donald Smith recognised this speedy banishment as an obstacle, but to one of his parts it was accepted in the right spirit as a temporary impediment to be overcome by earnest purpose and striving. His parents had given him at birth not only an iron constitution, but that shrewdness which is entirely Scotch, and he afterwards developed remarkable foresight and such a grasp of affairs and of complex situations as to amaze his associates. His career is almost as singular as his gifts; for the governorship can scarcely be said to be the goal of the general ambition; indeed, promotion being so slow, it follows that most men in the Hudson Bay Company's service live out their existence between the rank of clerk and that of factor.

For thirteen years the young man worked in this dreary region, going through the usual daily routine of a clerk and general assistant unrewarded by any promotion save in the good will and respect of his superiors. Even the brief summer time was not without its afflictions, as Lady Aberdeen in describing a dinner party at Sir Donald Smith's house, relates in her clever book, *Through Canada with a Kodak*, 'He told us of the

terrors of the Labrador mosquitoes, and how they have vanquished men who would fly from no other enemy. He instanced one case in which a friend of his was so sensitive to their bites that he had to stop every half-hour on the march to wash away the blood from his head and face.'

In spite of the severity of the cold, winter is the most delightful season for the traders; around Hudson Bay it is the only season that can be calmly endured. The winged pests to which Lady Aberdeen refers are by no means confined to the tide-soaked regions close to the great inland sea. The whole country is as wet as that orange of which geographers speak, when they tell us that the water on the earth's surface is proportional as if we were to rub a rough orange with a moist cloth. In the Hudson Bay Company's vast territories the illustration is graphically pointed in the countless lakes, great and small, and the many large rivers and innumerable small streams which make waterways the roads and canoes the wagons of the region. It is a vast paradise for mosquitoes in the summer time, and as far south as the border of the United States anglers and tourists have been put to flight by their on-slaughts.

Nor have men fled without reason before these venomous little pests, whose bite, in addition to the initial irritation, often means the entry of disease. Malaria, for instance, which used to be attributed to the unwholesome emanations from swampy lands, is now believed to be caused for the most part by poison introduced by mosquitoes.

The 'bulldog' mosquito is a terror reserved for special districts in the Company's domains. He is the Sioux of the insect world, as pretty as a warrior in buckskin and beads, but carrying a red-hot sword-blade, which, when sheathed in human flesh, will make the victim jump a foot from the ground. Fortunately the surprise and pain of the fierce attack are followed by no after inconveniences, for the barb of the 'bulldog,' though long and keen, is charged with no poison.

CHAPTER IX

INCIDENTS IN A FUR-TRADER'S LIFE

WHEN the mosquitoes disappeared with the approach of winter there followed eight months of short days with a temperature falling not infrequently to fifty degrees below zero; and in the long and often lonely hours after the early sunset it was good for Donald Smith that he could find solace in reading and writing. Only twice a year did the post come and go, carried by men in dog sleds over an expanse of ice and snow for two thousand miles, the longest and most dangerous postal route in the world.

The winter mail-packet, starting, say, from Winnipeg in the depth of the season, goes to all the Company's posts by what is termed 'dog train.' The letters and papers are packed in large boxes strapped to the sleds, behind which the drivers trot along, cracking their lashes and cursing the dogs. The eagerness may readily be imagined with which Donald Smith used to await this semi-annual mail. It was but a little speck on the snow-wrapped upper end of all North America. It cut a tiny trail, and here and there smaller black dots moved off from it to cut still slenderer threads, zig-zagging to the side factories and less important

posts; and as the winter mail arrived at the far off trading centres, with its letters and newspapers from home, by general consent a holiday would be proclaimed, toil, hardship, and solitariness being forgotten in the perusal of missives from the loved ones far away.

At the time when Donald Smith was serving as a clerk, a factor on the far north-east side of Hudson Bay used to read his daily newspaper every morning with his coffee. He managed this by having a complete set of the *Times* sent to him by the winter's packet; and each morning the paper of that date in the preceding year would be taken from the bundle, dampened as if fresh from the press, and placed by his plate. Thus he got for half an hour every day a taste of his old life and habits at home.

Mention has already been made of sled drivers cursing their dogs. It is a Hudson Bay maxim that no man who cannot curse in three languages is fit to be a dog-driver. The three profanities are, of course, English, French, and Indian; though it is said that whoever has heard the French spoken in the North-West regions knows that it ought to serve by itself, as it is half-soled with Anglo-Saxon oaths and heeled with strong words of Indian extraction.

The story is told of a worthy Bishop who, on complaining of the slow progress his sled was making, was told that it was useless to grumble as the dogs would not work properly unless they were roundly and incessantly cursed. After a time the Bishop gave his driver absolution for whatever profanity was needed during the rest

of the journey, and thenceforth the dogs sped over the snow at a gallop, every stroke of the driver's cruelly plied whip being sent home with a volley of highly flavoured words, emphasised at times by pelting the animals with sharp-edged bits of ice.

These dogs are as large as an ordinary Newfoundland dog, but their legs are shorter, and the hair on their necks stands erect in a thick bristling mass. They are disciplined only when at work, and are then so surprisingly tractable and industrious as to plainly show that, though their nature is savage, they could be reclaimed by domestication. They will draw a sled, in shape something like a toboggan, carrying close upon 300 pounds, over a daily distance of between twenty and thirty-five miles.

Night after night, when not called away on some long journey in the Company's interests, did Donald Smith find his most congenial task in writing letters to the mother who in far-off Scotland so eagerly awaited their arrival, and so proudly read their contents to her relations and others who cared to hear of the doings and welfare of the young fur-trader; for him there was no more effective antidote to home-sickness than, using his own words, 'to enter into spiritual intercourse with home.'

A favourite hobby, and a very pleasant one, of Donald Smith and his trading companions at the Company's stations on Hamilton Inlet was attending to the farm, which although at 'the back door of the North Pole' supplied everything in the way of vegetables, milk, and poultry required for the table all the year round. In addition to

trading and farming there was plenty of amateur medical work among the natives who, through the insanitary conditions amidst which they lived, were liable to epidemics such as scarlet fever and diphtheria. Donald Smith's energy and fearlessness—qualities shared by others of the Company's servants in Labrador—were often in evidence during his thirteen years in that land of desolation.

One striking instance is related by Mr Beccles Willson. Hearing that scarlet fever had broken out at a place twelve miles away, Donald Smith hastened to the rescue, and found a whole family huddled together in a small room without ventilation. 'It was nearly a counterpart,' says Mr Willson, 'of the Black Hole of Calcutta. The door was shut, and so were the windows, and the odour that came when the former was opened can best be left to the imagination. One of the family—a boy—had died, and his body lay in an outhouse. The first thing Mr Smith did was to break open the window and let in the air, and then to administer some remedies. . . . Not a single fatal case subsequently occurred.'

Such an adept did Donald Smith become in the treatment of surgical cases, as well as of disease, that he was able to speak as an authority fifty years later when, as Lord Strathcona, he delivered an address to the medical students attached to the Middlesex Hospital. Describing the antiseptic methods adopted by him in Labrador, he said, 'It was a primitive and somewhat rude form of treatment that was practised in those days before Lord Lister introduced his discovery. For

the treatment of wounds, ulcerated sores, etc., a pulp was made by boiling the inner bark of the juniper-tree. The liquor which resulted was used for washing and treating the wounds, and the bark, beaten into a plastic, pliable mass, was applied after the thorough cleaning of the wound, forming a soft cushion, lending itself to every inequality in the sore. Scrupulous cleanliness was observed, and fresh material used for every application.'

More than once it fell to the duty of Donald Smith during his life in Labrador to act as the civil celebrant of marriage between the lower grade of the Company's servants and Eskimo women. Many years afterwards one of these women whose nuptial knot he had tied was told that 'boss Smith' had become a great man and wore a golden crown.

'Well, well!' said she; 'me remember the day he married me and Isaac Diskyak at Rigolette same like as it was yesterday. Isaac he bought a ring at the Company's store to put it on my finger. But me foolish when Isaac died, and trade the ring off to a sailor for a plug of tobacco. And so boss Smith king now?'

When it was explained that he was a British lord, and not a king, the old woman, whom the missionaries had never succeeded in converting, expressed the hope that he would buy up all Labrador and kick every Moravian out of the country.

Even in a region so remote from the civilised world and so monotonous in its desolation as Labrador, humour was not wanting. A Scotchman,

newly come to one of the posts to which Donald Smith was attached, brought with him his bagpipes, and with the Company's servants and some Eskimos as audience played a number of Highland airs. 'Young men and maidens, old men and children,' among the Eskimos, in raptures with the strains, so new to them and so thrilling, spared no pains in expressing their delight by word and gesture. A day or two afterwards when an argument took place on the subject whether the Eskimos were of Icelandic or Mongol origin, the Scotch piper turned serious discussion into hearty laughter by crying out,—'Hoots, mon, ye're a' wrang! Did ye no see the chiefs the marn whilst I was twirlin' the pipes? I've nae doot—nae doot ava—they've true Hieland bluid in their veins!'

One who made no mean contribution to the gaiety of the station in Labrador to which Donald Smith belonged was an old Eskimo pilot named Tooktooshnah. Like many of his race he was gifted with a sense of humour, and with that and his huge stature and eccentric manner he figured as quite a popular character among his associates of high degree or low. 'He never,' we are told, '*knew* anything, but "*I suppose so*," and a term he often used was "handy by," meaning close to; his native place was Windy Tickle.'

Tooktooshnah's constant wish was to ape the appearance and doings of the Hudson Bay officers and their visitors. Calling at the office one day this Eskimo dandy asked Mr Smith to sell him a 'small port-hole' similar to what he had seen one of the officers wearing in his eye.

'I'm sorry,' answered Mr Smith, 'that I haven't

an eyeglass on sale, but I'll order one for you with pleasure.'

But before the order was sent the officer who sported the monocle remembered that he had another in his box and, knowing that Tooktooshnah was a man of capital, he asked a price that brought him a good profit by the sale of the eyeglass. Next day the Eskimo dandy created a small sensation by walking to and fro, pointing to his glass-decorated eye and saying to those he met, 'No. 1 Hudson Bay little port-hole, egad, sir!'

'That's an eyeglass, not a port-hole,' explained a bystander.

Looking at his instructor calmly through the eyeglass, the glorified Eskimo drawled in his best manner, 'I suppose so.'

Incidents such as these may appear trivial; but Tooktooshnah's personality was for years a mirth-provoking topic, and, therefore, a blessed thing for these dwellers within the withering influence of Nature's frozen frown in sullen Labrador.

An oft-repeated story of Donald Smith's apprenticeship period goes to prove that if, when he rose to power he expected unquestioning obedience from his subordinates, he had already schooled himself to discipline. During his Labrador days his eyes became so weak that he decided to seek advice from a specialist, and for that purpose travelled to Montreal, a journey of over a thousand miles across the wastes of snow. Arriving there he presented himself at the headquarters of the Hudson Bay Company, and in an interview with the Governor, Sir George Simpson, the following



London Electrotype Agency, Ltd. Stone Fort, Red River Settlement.

conversation is said, on the authority of Mr Beckles Willson, to have taken place :—

‘Well, young man, why are you not at your post?’

‘My—my eyes, sir,’ was the reply. ‘They got so very bad, that I was bound to come to see a doctor.’

‘And who gave you permission to leave your post?’ queried the irate Governor.

The only possible answer was, ‘No one, sir.’ To write for official sanction and obtain a reply would have taken many months.

‘No one!’ exclaimed the autocratic Sir George; ‘then if it’s a question between your eyes and your service in the Hudson Bay Company, you’ll take my advice and return this instant to your post.’

Report says that Donald Smith obeyed promptly, but common sense suggests that his Scottish shrewdness found some way of communicating with the oculist. Certainly we hear no more of the eye trouble.

During his first thirteen years in the Hudson Bay Company’s service he had no reward save in the consciousness of duty done. The work in the pitiless Labrador climate was hard and trying, and a strong spirit was needed, when, with no companionship save a few of his fellow employees, there came to him, year after year, nothing but the dull routine of so ‘trading with the natives as to bring a profit to the Company.

But at headquarters the qualities of this indefatigable and sensible young worker were watched and noted, and it began to be said of

him, 'No matter how poor the post might be, Donald Smith always showed a balance on the right side.'

The success he achieved as an underling during these thirteen years at last brought him the reward of an appointment to a chief tradership at one of the Company's posts in the Hudson Bay territory.

CHAPTER X

BY THE SHORES OF HUDSON BAY

AFTER leaving Labrador Donald Smith spent ten years as a chief trader on the shores of Hudson Bay. It may, therefore, prove interesting to see what kind of country that bay-shore territory was and is, and to peep into one of the forts, or trading posts, from which the officials carried on the Company's business in the vast surrounding territory.

There, and over the whole of that part of North America, three seasons come in four months—spring in June, summer in July and August, and Autumn in September. During the long eight months' winter the earth is covered deep in snow, and the water is locked beneath the ice. Geese, ducks, and smaller birds are more plentiful there than elsewhere in the continent; but they either give place to, or share the summer with, mosquitoes and black-flies—numberless, restless, merciless. For the land around Hudson Bay is a vast, level marsh, so wet that York Fort, on the southern shores, was built on piles, with elevated platforms around the buildings on which the men might walk.

Clusters of small pines and a number of stunted

willows dot the level waste, the only parts where trees are plentiful being upon the banks of the rivers. There is a wide belt of desolation called the Arctic Barrens all along the north; but, at some distance west of Hudson Bay, the vast forests of Canada, with the prairies to the south and the bare plains of ice and snow to the north, stretch in a mass over one thousand five hundred miles long and two or three hundred miles wide, on to the foot of the Rocky Mountains and across them to the verge of the Pacific.

Through the greater part of the Hudson Bay country the cold in winter registers 40° and even 50° below zero. Men in camp may be said to dress to go to bed; while all the houses at the trading posts are provided with double doors and windows, and have a large stove set in the midst to battle with the cold. These trading posts, known as forts, were in many cases really forts, in so far as palisades, sentry towers, and guns could make them so. But armaments were only needed in districts where the Indians were not trustworthy. In the forests and among the lakes and rivers, the character and behaviour of the natives made defence unnecessary.

The Hudson Bay buildings were in most places arranged either in a hollow square, or in the shape of the letter H, with the factor's house joining the two longer lines of structure. A long, low, white-washed log-house was set apart for the clerks. Other buildings were the store-rooms for stocking merchandise, the fur-houses where the furs and skins were kept, and the Indian trading house, in which all the bartering was done. A powder-house,

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ice-house, and oil-house, together with a stable and a boat-house for canoes, completed the post.

Naturally the clerks' house, or 'bachelors' quarters,' was the part of the post where jollity was most in evidence. Each man had a little bedroom containing his chest, a chair, and a bed, with the walls covered, if the taste of the owner inclined that way, with pictures from illustrated papers. The big room where all met during the long evenings or on off-days, was bare so far as its whitewashed or timbered walls went; but the long table in the middle was littered with books, papers, pens, tobacco-jars, and pipes.

Breakfast was served at nine o'clock, dinner at one, and tea at six. The food varied according to the locality. All over the prairie and plains stores of pemmican were kept, and men grew to like it in time, although it was nothing but dried buffalo beef pounded and mixed with melted fat. But where they had pemmican they were also treated to buffalo hunch in the season, and that was the greatest delicacy, except moose muffle (the nose of the moose), in all the Hudson Bay territory. In the forests and lake country there were venison and moose as well as beaver, and many kinds of birds, but dried fish was the staple (salmon in the west, and lake trout nearer the bay).

The little village-like collection of dwellings and sheds known as posts, or forts, in some districts show white against a green background in the prettiest way possible; but, as a rule, they cluster on the bank of a river, or by the side of a lake. In the midst of the post stands the flagstaff. This,

and the flag with the letters 'H. B. C.' displayed upon it, led to the old saying of the hunters that the initials stood for 'Here before Christ,' because, no matter how far away from the frontier a man might go, into regions where he fancied no white man had been, that flag and those letters stared him in the face.

The factor is still as he always has been, responsible only to himself for the discipline and management of his post. Therefore, among the trading posts we find all sorts of homes—homes where music and literature are enjoyed, and refined women give grace to the establishment; homes where no civilised woman rules; homes where religion is valued and missionaries welcomed; homes where the strains of a hymn are never heard and a chapter from the Bible never read. In some of the posts Hudson Bay rum used to meet the rum of the free-traders; but in this respect to-day the law of the Dominion of Canada prevails, and spirits may not be given or sold to the red man.

Among the many reasons that account for Donald Smith's rise to the supreme position in the Company's service one of the most important was his consummate tact in dealing with the Indians. The wisdom he showed will be best understood by a description of the trading transactions between the officials of the Hudson Bay Company and the various Indian tribes.

The trading room had its shelves laden with every imaginable article that Indians like and hunters need—clothes, blankets, files, scalp-knives,

twine, awls, beads, needles, pins, scissors, knives, kitchen-ware, guns, powder, and shot. An Indian who came in with furs threw them down, and when they were counted received the right number of castors—little pieces of wood which served as money—with which, after the hours of reflection an Indian requires at such a time, he bought what he wanted.

But there was a wide difference between such a trading room and one in a district made dangerous in Donald Smith's time by ferocious tribes of Crees, Sioux, Blackfeet, and Chippeways. In such places the Indians were let in only by one or two at a time, leaving their guns outside; the goods were hidden so as not to excite their cupidity, and what they wanted was given to them through a square hole grated with a cross of iron, the spaces only being large enough to pass a blanket. Precautions such as these, however, are no longer needed, owing in a large measure to the confidence created among the natives by Donald Smith's statesmanlike methods of arranging business on conciliatory plans.

In all the vast territory—almost as large as the whole of Europe—over which it was his destiny to rule, no sight was more interesting than to see a band of Indians on their way to trade at a post. Their custom was to wait until the first signs of spring, and then to pack up their winter's stores of furs, and take advantage of the last of the snow and ice for their journey. They hunted from November to May; but the trapping and shooting of bears went on until the middle of June; for, until May

began, these animals did not emerge from their winter dens.

Ballantyne, in his book on a fur-trader's experience, says merely that these savages were painted, and were decorated with scalp-locks fringing their clothing; but in Lewis and Clarkes' graphic and well-informed journal we read description after description of the brave costuming of these colour and ornament loving people. Take the Sioux, for instance. Their heads were shaven of all but a tuft of hair, and feathers hung from that. Instead of the universal blanket of to-day, their main garment was a robe of buffalo skin, with the fur left on, and the inner surface dressed white, painted gaudily with figures of beasts and queer designs, and fringed with porcupine quills. They wore the fur side out only in wet weather. Beneath this robe was a shirt of dressed skin, and under that a leathern belt, beneath which was tucked blanket-stuff or skin. A sensitive visitor newly arrived from Europe could not have desired warmer clothing.

Unfortunately for themselves the Indians, in addition to adopting many of the outward symbols of western civilisation, imitated also its vices, with the inevitable result that decadence, both moral and physical, set in. The semi-civilised Indian of to-day compares unfavourably with his wilder freer ancestor of a century ago, and though both the Canadian and United States Governments are doing their best, the race is gradually but surely disappearing.

In addition, they wore leggings of dressed antelope hide, with scalp-locks fringing the seams,

and prettily beaded moccasins for their feet. They had necklaces of the teeth or claws of wild animals; and, until they aped civilisation in the use of guns, carried a quiver and a brightly-painted shield.

The Company had a special uniform for all Indians in their employ—a blue, gray, or blanket cloak, very loose and reaching below the knee, with a red worsted belt around the waist, a cotton shirt, beaded leggings, and moccasins over blanket socks. In winter they wore buckskin coats lined with flannel.

CHAPTER XI

ACROSS SNOW AND ICE WITH DONALD SMITH

THE work of a chief factor is not confined to sitting in state at the central post and pulling the strings of business over the wide area committed to his charge. Frequently he has to go the round of all the subordinate posts in his district. On such journeys weeks are often occupied in crossing wildernesses of snow and ice, in passing hundreds of miles from the haunts of the white men, at one time enjoying the exhilaration of the ride and the splendour of the glittering landscape; at another undergoing discomforts and even perils enough to try the constitution of the strongest. Let us take an imaginary journey with Donald Smith on a round of his outposts.

The sled he uses for the longer journeys is gaily painted, and so full of soft furs—indispensable in such a rigorous climate—that the rider is enveloped like a chrysalis in a cocoon. The air, which fans only his face, is crisp and invigorating, and before him the lake or stream which he is crossing is a sheet of virgin snow—not Nature's winding-sheet as those who cannot love her have said, but rather a robe of beautiful ermine

fringed and embroidered with dark evergreen, and that in turn flecked at every point with snow, as if bejewelled with pearls. If the factor chats with his driver, who falls behind at rough places to keep the sled from overturning, their conversation has to be carried on in so high a tone as to startle the birds into flight, if there are any, and to appear like a startling intrusion into the peace of that vast, silent land. If silence is kept, the factor reads the prints of game in the snow, of foxes' pads and deer hoofs, of wolf prints in the whiteness, and the curious marks made by birds. To him all these signs are as legible as the Morse alphabet to telegraphists, and as important as stock quotations to eager men on the Exchange.

Suddenly in the distance appears a human figure, an Indian minding the traps he has set for fur-bearing animals. He is approached and hailed by the driver, often by some pretty and fanciful name that may mean in English, 'hawk flying across the sky at sunset,' 'silver salmon in the foaming rapids,' or 'glory of the blazing sun.' On goes the sled, and perhaps a village is the next object of interest; not a village in our sense of the term, but only a hut or two peeping above the bushes near the water, the eye being led thither by the signs of slothful disorder close by—the rotting canoe frame, bones and other refuse, the dirty tattered blankets, the twig-formed skeleton of a steam-bath such as Indians use very occasionally when tired, or ill, or uncommonly dirty, the worn-out snow-shoes hung on a tree, and the racks of frozen fish or dried meat here and there.

A dog rushes down to the water-side, barking furiously; this stirs the village pack, and brings out the squaws, who are addressed, as the Indian last met was, by some poetic names; albeit poetic licence is somewhat strained to form names not at all pretty to polite senses. 'All Stomach' was the name given to one dusky princess, an example of the lengths to which poesy may lead the untrammelled mind.

When the time comes to prepare camp for the night, the ground is cleared for a fire, timber and brushwood are cut, and the driver starts the flame in a tent-like pyramid of wood no higher or broader than a tea-cup. This tiny fire he spreads by adding fuel until he has built up a pile of thick flaming logs, cleverly planned with a back-log and glowing fire-bed, and a sapling bent over the hottest part to hold a hanging kettle. The dogs that have been quarrelling fiercely amongst themselves during these preparations as is their custom, will welcome the cheerful blaze, and, forgetting their private grudges, will sit on their haunches with their faces turned intently to the fire and watch the process of cooking bacon or dried meat to be eaten with bread for the evening meal.

Supper over, preparations are made for the night's rest. The method for this varies. Many a time was Lord Strathcona forced to lie content with nothing more cosy than a snug warm trough in the snow and a couple of blankets, but on more luxurious occasions he had boughs of balsam leaves for a 'shake-down,' with furs from the sled for his covering. Under conditions such

as these he slept as soundly as if he had been Santa Claus and only stirred once a year.

Then when the dead of night came there would fall around the mighty hush of the wilderness, broken at times by the hoot of an owl, the cry of a wolf, the snoring of the dogs, or the deep and mysterious thug of the straining ice on the neighbouring lake.

But if the earth seems asleep, not so the sky. The magic shuttle of the Aurora Borealis is frequently at work over those northern skies, sending its shifting lights weaving across the firmament with tremulous brilliancy and energy. Flashing and palpitating, the rose-tinted waves of light, and the luminous white bars, leap across the sky or dart up and down it in a manner wonderful, fantastic, awe-inspiring.

An incident in Donald Smith's journeys would be a meeting with some bands of Indians going to a post with furs for barter. Though the bulk of these hunters arrive in the spring or early summer, some may come at any time. The procession may be only that of a family, or of two or more families living together or as neighbours. The man, if there is but one group, is certain to be stalking ahead, carrying nothing but his gun. Then come the women heavily laden. They may have a sled packed with the furs and drawn by a dog or two, and an extra dog may bear a balanced load upon its back, but the squaw is certain to have a back-bending burden of meat, a battered kettle, and whatever personal property of any sort she and her liege-lord may possess. Children who can walk have to do so, but it sometimes happens that

on the squaw's back is a baby to add to the weariness of the uncomplaining and patient mother. These are the Indians from the lake and forest districts. The condition of those from the plains is much worse.

It would be difficult to imagine a more pitiable collection of human beings than a group of these last-mentioned Indians when journeying from their native plains to a trading centre. The burdens of furs are drawn by horses and dogs; women and children are laden with domestic baggage, while the lordly men are riding at ease; babies are carried, and children just able to walk are toddling along to the best of their ability. Torn blankets are to be seen; battered pots and pans; tents and poles; food-supplies of the poorest kind; a touchingly eloquent picture of what a summary eviction would look like in the slums of a great city.

Scenes such as these came frequently under the pitiful observation of Donald Smith as he journeyed to and fro over the Hudson Bay territories; and that sympathetic consideration was extended to the Indians was largely due to his sense of humanity. There was much to be admired in the Indian race, and Donald Smith did his best to keep these interesting people from degenerating. The influence of civilisation had tended towards enfeebling them; but while the future Lord Strathcona had recognised the inevitable decay of the aborigines before the westward advance of the European, it was not in his power to prevent it.

What he saw, and what troubled him, and what he strove to ameliorate, was the sinking of free nature, however savage originally, into

degeneracy through contact with civilisation and a desire to emulate it. He saw the once freedom-loving native dressed in clothing of European make, turning round and round a fire of wet wood to keep from freezing to death; given meat if he happened to be docile; left to starve if he threatened to go on the 'war-path'; encouraged to be meek and beg; and so on through all the windings of a sickening story.

Donald Smith saw districts peopled by Indian beggars in such pitiful stress for food and covering that, by his influence, the Hudson Bay Company had kept them alive by advances of provisions and blankets winter after winter.

The great fur Company has, through Donald Smith's wisdom and humanity, added generosity to its just dealing with these poor grown-up children of the forests and plains; for though the Company has profited largely it has not, during the last hundred years at least, cheated the Indians, or done anything to forfeit their good will and respect. Its relations to them has been paternal, and to the Company they owe none of their degradation.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNION OF CANADA

AFTER serving for ten years as a chief trader for the Company in the Hudson Bay Territory, Donald Smith was chosen for the important office of Chief Factor; and in 1868, having reached his forty-eighth year and given thirty years of unremitting energy and keen capacity to all his undertakings in the service, he received his reward. The Governor and Committee in London did well for themselves and honour to Mr Donald Smith by electing him Chief Executive Officer of the Company in North America, in succession to Governor Dallas who had been appointed to the post on the death of Sir George Simpson. From the position of apprentice-clerk, the lowest rung in the Company's ladder, he had climbed to the highest rank in the service.

'He had been,' as Mr Beckles Willson graphically puts it, 'for more than a generation shut off in the Arctic wilderness from his fellows; he had endured privations, cold, and fatigue. Many who met him at this time might rationally have conceived him as having gained the summit of his ambition and as settling down in a new position to enjoy the fruits of power in Montreal, as his

famous predecessor, Sir George Simpson, had done before him. Who, therefore, could have dreamt that so far from having reached its zenith, the career of "Donald Smith, the Hudson Bay man" (as Sir John A. Macdonald came to call him), instead of ending was only just beginning?'

The thirty years roughing it in the solitary wilds of the cheerless regions around Hudson Bay had in no degree affected the polish of Donald Smith's manners. Only a year after his appointment to the Company's headship a newly-appointed official saw him and wrote of him, 'I called to-day to pay my respects to Donald A. Smith, our Great Mogul of the service, and was surprised to find him so affable and unassuming, with no trace of the ruggedness you would associate with the wilderness. You'd think he had spent all his life at the Court of St James instead of Labrador; and I came away feeling I was going to be made a Chief Factor right away, instead of having to wait about fifteen years more for that promotion.'

A chance soon came for Mr Smith to prove his capacity for meeting grave difficulties with promptness, courage, and wisdom. To describe the events that brought him historically to the front it is necessary to tell briefly the story of the North-West Company, whose fur-trading enterprise was for years a thorn in the side of the older Hudson Bay Company. When Donald Smith was appointed in 1868 to the head of affairs, Canada comprised only the four provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia; and it

became the immediate duty of its public men to complete the union by the admission of Prince Edward Island on the Atlantic shore and British Columbia on the Pacific, and by the acquisition of the vast region which had for so long been under the rule of the fur-traders.

As Lord Dufferin, of Governor-Generals the most picturesque in his eloquence, has said, 'The historical territories of the Canadas—the eastern sea-boards of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Labrador—the lakes and valleys, corn-lands, and pastures, though themselves more extensive than half a dozen European kingdoms, were but the vestibules and ante-chambers to that undreamt-of dominion whose illimitable dimensions alike confound the arithmetic of the surveyor and the verification of the explorer.'

The history of this North-West, whose rolling prairies now constitute so large a proportion of the wealth of Canada, was, until, 1867, entirely the history of the fur trade. Towards the latter part of the eighteenth century—we read in the picturesque pages of Sir J. G. Bourinot's *Canada*, the merchants of Canada, who were individually dealing in furs, formed an association which, under the title of the North-West Company, was long the rival of the Hudson Bay adventurers. Both these companies were composed of Englishmen and Scotchmen, but they were nevertheless bitter enemies, engaged as they were in the same business in the wilderness. The employees of the Hudson Bay Company were chiefly Scotch, while the North-West Company found in the French-Canadian population that class of men whom it

believed to be most suitable for a forest life. The posts of the latter Company were to be seen throughout that vast extent of territory stretching north-west of Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains, a distance in length of over 1500 miles, and in width of about 500 miles. The North-West Company were practically lords over the enormous tracts of rivers and lakes, forests and prairie, of which the huge lake of Winnipeg is the centre.

On the banks of the Red River, where it joins the stream of the Assiniboine, to the south of Lake Winnipeg, a small attempt was made to establish a colony amidst the illimitable domain of the fur-traders. This was in 1735, and affairs were untroubled until 1811, when an enterprising and philanthropic Scotch nobleman, the Earl of Selkirk, became a large proprietor of Hudson Bay stock, and purchased from the Company over a hundred thousand square miles of territory which he named Assiniboia. Here, on the banks of the Red River, he made a settlement of Highland Scotch and a few Irish close to the site of the afterwards flourishing town of Winnipeg.

The North-West Company looked with suspicion on this movement of Lord Selkirk, especially as he had such large influence with the rival Company. In 1816, the employees of the former, chiefly half-breeds, destroyed the new Scotch settlement of Fort Douglas, and murdered Governor Semple, who was in charge. As soon as the news of this outrage reached Lord Selkirk, he hastened to the succour of the district he had colonised, and with the aid of some disbanded soldiers, whom he hired

in Canada, he restored order. Subsequently he succeeded in bringing to trial several persons in the service of the North-West Company on the charges of 'high treason, murder, robbery, and conspiracy,' but on all counts the accused were acquitted. The North-West Company at this time had considerable influence throughout Canada, and at their instigation actions were brought against Lord Selkirk for false imprisonment and for conspiring to ruin the trade of the Company, and a verdict went against him with heavy damages. Lord Selkirk, who was inspired by the best motives in wishing to colonise a most fertile country, without interfering with the operations of the fur-traders, died two years later in France. Then the two companies, which had received serious injury through their rivalry, were amalgamated, and until 1870 the Hudson Bay Company reigned supreme.

The Red River Settlement, as it was called, became the headquarters of the Company, who established in 1835 a system of local government—a President and Council, and court of law—and built Fort Garry bearing the name of a director of the Company. The new fort was a stone structure, having walls from ten to twelve feet high, flanked by bastions defended by cannon and musketry. In 1867, when Mr Donald Smith rose to supreme power, the houses of the settlers occupied the banks of the Red River at short intervals for twenty-four miles. Many evidences of prosperity and thrift were seen throughout the settlement; the churches and school-houses proved that religion and education were highly valued by the

people. The most conspicuous structure was the Roman Catholic church of St Boniface, whose bells at matins and vespers were so often a welcome sound to the wanderers on the plain and the boatmen on the river. They were the bells that inspired the writer of one of the prettiest of Canadian songs :—

Is it the clang of wild-geese,
Is it the Indians' yell,
That lends to the voice of the North wind
The tone of a far-off bell ?

The voyageur smiles as he listens
To the sound that grows apace;
Well he knows the vesper ringing
Of the bells of St Boniface;

The bells of the Roman mission
That call from their turrets twain,
To the boatmen on the river,
To the hunter on the plain.

On all sides there were evidences of comfort and prosperity in this little oasis of civilisation amidst the prairies. The descendants of the two nationalities dwelt apart in French and British parishes, each of which had its separate school and church. The houses and plantations of the British settlers, and of a few French-Canadians, indicated thrift; but the majority of the French half-breeds, or *Métis* as they were called, who were the descendants of French-Canadian fathers and Indian mothers, continued to live almost entirely on the fur trade, as voyageurs, trappers, and hunters. They exhibited all the characteristics of those hardy and adventurous men who were the pioneers

of the west. Skilful hunters but poor cultivators of the soil, fond of amusement, rash and passionate, spending their gains as soon as made, too often dissipated, many of them were true representatives of the forest rovers in the Canadian days of old.

This class was numerous in 1869 when the Canadian Government claimed the territory of the North-West as a part of the Dominion. After years of negotiation the Hudson Bay Company had recognised the necessity of allowing the army of civilisation to advance into the region which it had so long kept as a fur preserve. The whole country from the northern boundary of the United States to the Arctic region, and from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains became a portion of the Canadian domain, with the exception of small tracts of land in the vicinity of the Company's posts, which they still continue to maintain wherever the fur-trade can be profitably carried on.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BEGINNING OF A REBELLION

IN 1869, the Canadian ministry, with Sir John Macdonald as Premier, took measures to assume possession of the North-West country, in which they proposed to establish a provisional government. Mr William McDougall, a prominent Canadian Liberal, always an earnest advocate of the acquisition of the North-West, was appointed to act as Lieutenant-Governor as soon as the formal transfer could be made. This transfer, however, was not completed until a few months later than was at first expected, and the Canadian Government seems to have acted over hastily in sending surveyors into the country, and in allowing Mr McDougall to proceed at once to take up official residence.

It would have been wise if the Canadian authorities had tried to understand what were the wishes of the small but independent population with respect to the future government of their own country. The British as well as the French settlers resented the hasty action of the Canadian Government. The half-breeds looked upon the entrance of the surveying parties as an insidious attempt to dispossess them eventually

of their lands, to which many of them had not a sound title. Some of the Hudson Bay Company's employees were not in their hearts pleased at the transfer, which seemed likely to weaken their strength in a country where they had for so long been masters. Although these men stood aloof from the insurrection which followed, yet their influence was neither exercised in favour of peace and order at the commencement of the troubles, nor in exposing what they knew of the plans of the insurgents.

In the summer of 1869, Mr Donald Smith was visited by Mr Mactavish, the Governor of Assiniboia, who was in dread of evil consequences following the transfer of the new settlement to Canada. Mr Smith looked at the whole question with the eyes of a statesman unaffected by local prejudice. He assured Mr Mactavish that the Company would profit by this transfer, and that the Company's officers would in the long run not be losers financially. Mactavish was not convinced and returned to the Red River weighed down by a sense that injustice was being done. His health had become enfeebled through disappointments and the worry of the disturbance, and he died about a year later. Donald Smith, who recognised his high qualities, was able to say of him in a speech delivered in 1876, 'Mactavish was well known to be a gentleman of the strictest integrity, a man ever actuated by the highest principles of honour, a man whose memory was enshrined in the hearts of the whole people of the Red River of his day. He would be long remembered for the good he had conferred on the country.'

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The Deed of Transfer was signed in London, 19th November, 1869. 'But long before that date,' says Mr Beckles Willson, 'so eager were Canadians to invade their prospective possession, that surveying parties were sent out to Red River. Mr McDougall, the Canadian Minister of Public Works, who had been active in promoting the transfer and had been appointed Governor, tried to hurry things on regardless of the susceptibilities of public opinion, and affairs generally were conducted with imprudence and indiscretion. The result might have been foreseen—indeed was foreseen by many; prejudice was inflamed against the new-comers, and out of all the fierce clash of interests and excited babel of tongues at Red River there emerged the figure of the rebel and demagogue, Louis Riel.

On his way to take up his position as Governor of the Red River Settlement, McDougall, on 21st October, 1869, at Pembina, on the American border, received a letter from the insurgents warning him not to continue his journey. Naturally he disregarded this, and pushed on to one of the Hudson Bay Company's posts which he made his temporary headquarters. There he heard that Fort Garry had been seized, and that the rebels had established a provisional government with John Bruce, a Scotch settler, as nominal President, and Louis Riel, the actual leader, as Secretary of State; and at the same time he received a letter from the Canadian Premier advising him how to treat the leader of the insurgents. 'Th's man Riel,' wrote Sir John Macdonald, 'who appears to be the moving spirit, is a clever fellow, and you

should endeavour to retain him as an officer in your future police. If you do this promptly it will be a convincing proof that you are not going to leave the half-breeds out of the law.'

Louis Riel was a French half-breed, who had been superficially educated in French Canada. His temperament was that of a race not inclined to steady occupation, loving the life of the river and plain, ready to put law at defiance whenever they imagined that their rights and privileges were in danger. This restless man and his half-breed associates soon found themselves at the head and front of the whole rebellion movement, as the British settlers, while disapproving the action of the Canadian Government, were not prepared either to support the seditious designs of the French Canadian *Métis*, or to appear in arms against them.

In a message sent to McDougall, advising him to remain outside the territory, the mouth-piece of the well-affected British settlers said :—

'The character of the new government has been settled in Canada without our being consulted. We are prepared to accept it respectfully, to obey the laws and to become good subjects; but when you present to us the issue of a conflict with the French party, with whom we have hitherto lived in friendship, backed up as they would be by the Roman Catholic Church, which appears probable by the course at present being taken by the priests, in which conflict it is almost certain the aid of the Indians would be invoked, and perhaps obtained,

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by that party, we feel disinclined to enter upon it, and think that the Dominion should assume the responsibility of establishing amongst us what it, and it alone, has decided upon.'

On 9th November, 1867, Governor Mactavish penned two letters from the Company's Red River post at Fort Garry—they were among the last written in his fast-closing and, latterly, sorely-troubled life. Writing to the Company in London he said :—

'The position is undoubtedly serious, and the case will require very careful handling, as any collision between parties will lead to the Indians of the plains being brought down to the settlement next spring, as well as disturbances over all the plain districts, which will not be put down for years, long before which the business of the whole country will have been destroyed.'

The second letter was addressed to Mr Donald Smith :—

'DEAR MR SMITH,—I regret very much to have to inform you that the Honourable William McDougall, who has been warned by the Canadian half-breeds not to come into the country, has been, on his arrival at Pembina within the last week, driven out of the Company's establishment and forced to withdraw within the American lines by an armed party of that same portion of our population.

'At the same time that they drove back Mr McDougall, a party was sent here (Fort Garry)

to occupy this establishment under the pretext of supporting it; and though their protection was declined, they still remain and, it would appear, are determined to go to greater lengths than they have yet done; and the nominal leaders of the movement have invited delegates from the other portions of the population to meet them on the 16th inst., to consider the condition of the country, as well as to express their views as to the form of government to be adopted.'

It was on 2nd November, that the insurgents took possession of the Company's trading post at Fort Garry. At the entrance they were met by the chief trader in charge, and the following conversation is reported as having taken place :—

'What do you want here with all these armed men?' said the Company's officer to Riel.

'We have come to guard the fort,' was the reply.

'Against whom?'

'Against danger,' answered Riel in his most insolent manner; 'I have reason to believe it is threatened. I will explain no more at present.'

The officer protested, but all to no purpose, and Riel, with a hundred followers, occupied the Company's fort which remained for many months in their possession until the arrival of an Imperial force commanded by Colonel Wolseley (afterwards Lord Wolseley) sent to crush the Red River rebellion.

From Fort Garry, as headquarters, Riel sent

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forth a proclamation protesting against the authority of Canada, which 'would rule us with a rod of despotism.' Then the leader caused to be arrested sixty persons known to be opponents of his policy, and kept them confined in Fort Garry, over which floated the new flag of the insurgents, which consisted of a white ground adorned with the fleur-de-lis and a shamrock. McDougall issued a proclamation as a counter-blast and retired to Ottawa where he prepared an account of his troubles, and retired from public life.

'Two thousand miles away, in Montreal, Mr Smith surveyed the situation,' writes his biographer, Mr Willson. 'He saw what McDougall's faults of policy had been. He saw the danger and also perceived the remedy. What was needed was a man on the spot who could treat with both factions, who from his position could look at matters from both the Company's and the Canadian standpoint, who, if he did nothing else, would at least establish the Company's *bona fides* and clear it from the imputations which were now being cast upon it. In brief, he saw his plain duty, and he did not shrink from it, although it now came to involve a grave personal risk.

'Mr Donald Smith was not the one to wait for instructions from London before making up his mind as to his duty. He resolved to depart immediately for Red River, and communicated this intention to the Canadian Premier. In view of any prejudice which might exist against a Hudson Bay officer, Sir John Macdonald felt it would be

for the public advantage if Mr Smith could proceed in the capacity of Commissioner from the Dominion Government. Little time was lost in preparation. Requesting his brother-in-law, Richard Hardisty, to accompany him, and taking an affectionate farewell of his wife and children, he set out on the following day for Ottawa.

CHAPTER XIV

DONALD SMITH'S FIRST PAGE IN HISTORY

ON reaching Ottawa, Donald Smith waited upon Sir John Macdonald, the Premier, and the Governor-General, Sir John Young (afterwards Lord Lisgar), and received the formal document empowering him to act as the Government's Special Commissioner to the Red River Settlement to inquire into the causes of the rebellion, to act as mediator, and to make an Advisory Report on the whole subject.

The terms of the Commission are sufficiently interesting to be quoted in full :—

'VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, etc.

'To Donald A. Smith, of the City of Montreal, of the Province of Quebec, in the Dominion of Canada, Esquire, and to all others to whom the same be in anywise concerned, GREETING.

'Whereas, by an Act of the Parliament of Canada passed in the thirty-third year of our Reign, intituled "An Act for the temporary Government of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory, when united to Canada," it is recited that it is possible that we may be pleased to admit Rupert's Land and the North-West

Territory into the Union of the Dominion of Canada before the then next session of the Canadian Parliament, and that it is expedient to prepare for the transfer of the said territories, and that it is expedient to prepare for the transfer of the said Local Authorities to the Government of Canada, at this time appointed by us for the Civil Government of such territories, until more permanent arrangements can be made by the Government and Legislative of Canada, and it is by the same act in effect enacted that our Governor may authorise and empower such officer as he may appoint as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, and who shall administer the Government as the said Act contemplated.

‘And whereas, in the preparation for the transfer of the said Territories, our Governor of Canada was pleased to send the Honourable William McDougall, the gentleman selected to be Lieutenant-Governor as aforesaid, on its union with Canada, in advance and in anticipation of the union, and his entry into the same Territories was obstructed and prevented by certain armed parties who have declared their discontent and dissatisfaction at the proposed union and their intention to resist the same by force.

‘And whereas it is expedient that inquiry should be made into the causes and extent of such obstruction, opposition, and discontent, as aforesaid.

‘Now know ye, that having confidence in your honesty, fidelity, and integrity, we do, by these presents, nominate, constitute, and appoint you,



Photo: Underwood & Underwood, London.

Homes and Boats of Eskimos, Ellesmere Land.

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the said Donald A. Smith, to be our Special Commissioner to inquire into the causes, nature, and extent of the obstruction offered in the Red River, in the North-West Territories, to the peaceable ingress of the Honourable William McDougall and other parties authorised by our Governor-General of Canada to proceed into the same; and also to inquire into the causes and discontent and dissatisfaction alleged to exist in respect to the proposed union of the said North-West Territories with the Dominion of Canada; and further, to explain to the inhabitants of the said country the principles on which the Government of Canada intends to administer the government of the country according to such instructions as may be given to you by our Governor in Council in this behalf; and to take steps to remove any misapprehensions which may exist in respect to the mode of government of the same; and to report to our Governor-General the result of such inquiries and on the best mode of quieting and removing such discontent and dissatisfaction; and also to report on the most proper and fitting mode for effecting the speedy transfer of the country and government from the authority of the Hudson Bay Company to the Government of Canada with the general consent of the inhabitants.

'And further, to consider and report on the most advisable mode of dealing with the Indian tribes in the North-West Territories.

'To have and to hold the said office of Commissioner for the purposes aforesaid unto you, the said Donald A. Smith, during pleasure.

'In testimony whereof,' etc.

L.S.

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CHAPTER XV

DONALD SMITH A PRISONER

*(Selections from Mr Smith's own Narrative in a
Report addressed to the Secretary of State)*

'LEAVING Ottawa on the 13th December last (1869), I reached St Cloud, the terminus of railway communication on the 17th, continuing on the same day by stage, and arriving at Abercrombie on the evening of the 19th. Here we had to abandon wheel carriages, and procuring a sleigh, after a couple of hours' rest, we resumed the journey, and on the evening of the 21st met Mr McDougall about thirty miles beyond Georgetown. From him I learned how serious the aspect of affairs had lately become at Red River, and pushing on, we got to Pembina about 11 p.m. of the 24th, and to Fort Garry on the 27th.

'The gate of the Fort we found open, but guarded by several armed men, who, on my desiring to be shown to the Governor's house, requested me to wait until they could communicate with their chief. In a short time Mr Louis Riel appeared. I announced my name. He said he had heard of my arrival at Pembina, and was about to send off

a party to bring me in. I then accompanied him to a room occupied by ten or a dozen men, whom he introduced to me as members of the "Provisional Government."

'He requested to know the purport of my visit, to which I replied in substance that I was connected with the Hudson Bay Company, but also held a commission from the Canadian Government to the people of Red River, and would be prepared to show my credentials as soon as they (the people) were willing to receive me. I was then asked to take oath not to attempt to leave the Fort that night, nor to upset their government, legally established. This request I peremptorily refused to comply with, but said that, being very tired, I had no desire to go outside the gate that night, and promised to take no immediate steps forcibly to upset the so-called "Provisional Government," legal or illegal as it might be, without first announcing my intention to do so. Mr Riel took exception to the word "illegal," while I insisted on retaining it. Mr O'Donoghue (one of Riel's Council) remarked, to get over the difficulty, "That is as he" (meaning myself) "understands it"; to which I replied, "Precisely so." The above explanation I am the more particular in giving, as it has been reported that I at once acknowledged the "Provisional Government" to be legal. Neither then nor afterwards did I do so.

'I took up my quarters in one of the houses occupied by the Hudson Bay Company's officers, and from that date till towards the end of February (1870), was virtually a prisoner within the Fort, although with permission to go outside the walls

for exercise, accompanied by two armed guards, a privilege of which I never availed myself.

'All my official papers had been left in charge at Pembina, as I had been warned that, if found in my possession, they would unquestionably have been seized. . . .

'The state of matters at this time in and around Fort Garry was most unsatisfactory, and truly humiliating. Upwards of sixty British subjects were held in close confinement as "political prisoners"; security for persons or property there was none; the Fort, with its large supplies of ammunition, provisions, and stores of all kinds, was in the possession of a few hundred French half-breeds, whose leaders had declared their determination to use every effort for the purpose of annexing the territory to the United States. . . .

'On the 6th of January (1870), I saw Mr Riel, and soon came to the conclusion that no good could arise from entering into any negotiations with his "Council," even were we to admit their authority, which I was not prepared to do. . . .

'Meantime we had frequent visits in the Fort from some of the most influential and most reliable men in the settlement, who gladly made known to the people generally the liberal intentions of the Canadian Government, and in consequence one after another of Riel's councillors seceded from him; and being joined by their friends and many of their compatriots and co-religionists, who had throughout held aloof from the insurgents, they determined no longer to submit to his dictation. This change evidently had a marked effect upon Riel, causing him to alter

his tactics and to profess a desire for an accommodation with Canada. Accordingly, on the 14th of January he called on me, informed me that he had seen Messrs Thibault and de Salaberry (men of influence with the French half-breeds, and sent by the Canadian Government to attempt to pacify them), whose instructions did not authorise them to give assurances that the people would be secured in possession of their rights on entering into the Confederation, their errand merely being "to calm the French half-breeds."

'Riel then asked to see my commission, and on my explaining that, owing entirely to the action taken by himself, it was not in my possession, in an excited yet faltering manner he said, "Yes, I know; 'tis a great pity; but how soon could you have it?"

"Probably in five or six days," I replied.

"That is too long, far too long," he responded. He then asked me where the documents were deposited, requesting at the same time a written order for their delivery to his messenger. To this I would not accede, but on his assuring me that they would be delivered into my hands, and that I should be afforded an opportunity of communicating their contents to the people, I consented to send a friend for them. It was so decided, and immediately after the messenger had received his instructions from me I was placed under strict arrest, a captain's guard being assigned me, whose instructions were not to lose sight of me, day or night, and prevent me from communicating either verbally or in writing with any individual.

"Am I to consider myself under arrest?" I asked.

"Certainly not," he replied; "I have the utmost confidence in your honour, but circumstances demand this."

'It was now about ten o'clock, and my messenger having been marched out, I retired to bed, but only to be awakened 'twixt two or three o'clock in the morning of the 15th by Mr Riel, who, with a guard, stood by the bedside and again demanded a written order for the delivery of my official papers, which I again peremptorily refused to give.

'The well-affected French party became aware of what had happened, and not believing in Riel's good faith, determined to prevent the papers from falling into his hands. They got together some sixty or eighty men, who met my friend on his way back, and were escorting him, when on the 18th, about ten miles from the Fort, they were accosted by Riel and some of his party. An altercation took place. Riel attempted to use his pistol, saying, "I will not be taken alive in my own country," on which a revolver was levelled at his head. Nothing more serious happened at this time, and the party proceeded together to Fort Garry.

'A few minutes before they entered the house, the very Rev. Mr Thibault, Père Lestanc, and Colonel de Salaberry called upon me, and with the exception of my guard they were the first individuals with whom I was permitted to converse since the 14th. They appeared to be much concerned, and said it was currently reported I had

been endeavouring to incite the different parties to hostile collisions. I repudiated any such charge, explaining that I had acted only in the cause of peace and order, and with the desire of making the people, both French and English, fully acquainted with the liberal views of the Canadian Government.

'In the meantime the party in possession of my papers entered the adjoining room, in which Père Lestanc joined them, while Messrs Thibault and de Salaberry went outside. Immediately after they retired Mr Riel came to me, saying, "Your commission is here, but in the hands of men who had no right to have it." I expressed satisfaction that it had been brought in, and said, being now in possession of it, I must be relieved from all restraint, and be permitted to communicate freely with the people. He at once removed the guard, and we went up to the party who had just arrived.'

Note.—Major Boulton, whose life not long afterwards was saved, by the prompt and energetic action of Mr Smith, thus graphically describes the scene of the arrival of the papers :—

'The whole party returned to Fort Garry together; and Hardisty (Mr Smith's brother-in-law, who had been sent for the papers) was conducted to the Council Chambers. Mr Smith came there to receive the papers, and as they were being handed to Mr Smith, O'Donoghue, a member of Riel's "Provisional Government," attempted to snatch them, but Mr Grant drew his revolver and prevented this. The scene, as described to me, was an exciting one; for Riel and his party were anxious to get the papers, so as to deprive

Mr Smith of any authority before the people; and it required a great deal of planning on Mr Smith's part to get possession of them.'

To continue Mr Donald Smith's personal narrative :—'After a good deal of recrimination it was ultimately arranged that a meeting of the inhabitants from all parts of the settlement should be called on the morrow, the 19th, at which the papers bearing on the subject should be read, a guard of forty men remaining in the house to ensure the safe keeping of the documents.

'Riel's men were now falling away from him, while the loyal party were full of hope that the following day would bring with it complete success in the cause of Canada.'

CHAPTER XVI

LOYALISTS AND REBELS

*(Mr Donald A. Smith's Personal Narrative
continued)*

'THE hour for the meeting having arrived, upwards of a thousand people attended in the open air, with the temperature 20° below zero. Deeming it of great importance that the explanation to be made on behalf of the Canadian Government should be faithfully rendered to the French-speaking portion of the settlers, whose leaders had studiously withheld from them all knowledge of the true state of matters in connection with the proposed transfer of the country, I requested Colonel de Salaberry to act as interpreter, but the Colonel, diffident of his own ability as a translator, proposed Mr Riel as an interpreter, and the latter was appointed accordingly.'

(Mr Smith's speech, and the copy of a letter written to him by the Governor-General of Canada, together with the communication from Queen Victoria sent through Lord Granville, were, of course, not given in Mr Smith's Narrative, which was purely an official Report; but they are of historic and personal interest and may with advantage appear here.)

Said Mr Smith, in concluding his opening speech : 'I am here to-day in the interests of Canada, but only so far as they are in accordance with the interests of this country. ("Hear, hear," and cheers). Under no other circumstances would I have consented to act. (Cheers.) As to the Hudson Bay Company, my connection with that body is, I suppose, generally known ; but I will say that if it could do any possible good to this country I would, at this moment, resign my position in that Company. I sincerely hope that my humble efforts may, in some measure, contribute to bring about, peaceably, union and entire accord among all classes of the people of this country.' (Cheers.)

Mr Smith then read the following letter addressed to himself by the Governor-General of Canada :—

OTTAWA,
December 12, 1869.

'MY DEAR MR SMITH,—I learn with satisfaction that you have placed your services at the disposal of the Canadian Government, and that you are proceeding to Red River to give the parties that are at variance the benefit of your experience, influence, and mediation. . . . You may state with the utmost confidence that the Imperial Government has no intention of acting otherwise, or permitting others to act otherwise than in perfect good faith towards the inhabitants of the Red River district of the North-West.

'The people may rely upon it that respect and protection will be extended towards the different religious persuasions; that titles of every description of property will be carefully guarded; and that all the franchises which have existed, and which the people may prove themselves qualified to exercise, shall be duly continued or liberally conferred.

'In declaring the desire and determination of Her Majesty's Cabinet you may safely use the terms of the ancient formula, that right shall be done in all cases.

'Wishing you a prosperous journey and all success in your mission of peace and goodwill,

'I remain,

'Faithfully yours,

'JOHN YOUNG.'

There was yet another document to be read, and Riel did his best to prevent it from being brought before the meeting. But it was Mr Smith's master-card, and he played it with perfect confidence. Every reason had the arch-rebel to fear the effect of what the speaker had next to say.

'One of the documents I have now to read to you,' said Mr Smith, speaking slowly and with enough emphasis to make himself heard by every one in that open-air crowd, 'is a communication from the Queen, our Sovereign. It is a telegraph message which was put into my hands in Canada very shortly after being received from England. It is a message from Queen Victoria

to Sir John Young, dated November 26.
Listen to it.'

A deep hush ensued as Mr Smith began to read the following message from the well-beloved and venerated Queen Victoria :—

'The Queen has heard with surprise and regret that certain misguided persons have banded together to oppose by force the entry of the future Lieutenant-Governor into our territory in Red River. Her Majesty does not mistrust the loyalty of persons in that settlement, and can only ascribe to misunderstanding or misrepresentation their opposition to a change planned for their advantage.

'She relies on your Government to use every effort to explain whatever misunderstandings may have arisen—to ascertain their wants and conciliate the goodwill of the people of the Red River Settlement. But in the meantime she authorises you to signify to them the sorrow and displeasure with which she views the unreasonable and lawless proceedings that have taken place; and her expectation that if any parties have desires to express, or complaints to make, respecting their condition and prospects, they will address themselves to the Governor-General of Canada.

'The Queen expects from her representative that, as he will be always ready to receive well-founded grievances, so will he exercise the power and authority she entrusted to him in the support of order and the suppression of unlawful disturbances.'

To continue Mr Donald Smith's personal narrative.—

'At this meeting, and that held the following day, the reading of the Commission, the Queen's letter, and every other document was contested with much obstinacy, but ultimately carried; and threats were used to myself in the presence and hearing of the chairman, the secretary, and others, more especially by Mr Riel and Rev. Mr Lestanc. At the commencement of the meeting I requested the chairman and those near to him to begin by insisting that all arms should be laid down, and that the flag then flying (fleur-de-lis and shamrock) should be replaced by the British ensign. This they thought would come better at an after-stage; but the opportunity of doing so, now lost, never recurred.

The result of the meeting was the appointment of a convention of forty delegates, twenty from either side, to meet on the 25th January (1870), 'with the object of considering Mr Smith's Commission and to decide what would be best for the welfare of the country,' the English as a body and a large number of French declaring their entire satisfaction with the explanations given and their earnest desire for union with Canada.

'On the 22nd Riel had several conferences with the well-affected French within the Fort; he was melted even to tears, told them how earnestly he desired an arrangement with Canada, and assured them that he would lay down his authority immediately on the meeting of the convention. They believed him sincere, and although I considered

that their guard in the Fort should not be decreased they held that ten men would be amply sufficient to leave while they went to secure their elections. The consequence was that they had hardly gone when repressive measures were resorted to, and the Hudson Bay Company's stores, which had hitherto been only partially in their hands, were now taken complete possession of by Riel. Efforts were made to have the prisoners released, but without effect.'

CHAPTER XVII

RIEL THE DICTATOR

THE delegates to the new Convention met on the 25th, and continued in session till February 10th. During that time Mr Smith was always shadowed by spies; indeed, he was Riel's prisoner from the moment he entered Fort Garry, in spite of the commission he held from the Governor-General of Canada. With what vigilance all in opposition to Riel's policy were watched is shown in an incident related by Mr Beckles Willson :—

'Governor Mactavish, having occasion to send some letters to Stone Fort on the evening of the 26th, entrusted them to a messenger, who, by taking great precautions, succeeded in leaving Fort Garry without being observed. He had not gone far, however, when a man seemed to spring up out of the snow. He presented a musket, ordered the messenger to halt, then silently conducted him back through the gates into Riel's presence. Riel demanded his papers, received them, and smiling scornfully, returned them unopened to Mactavish.'

(Mr Smith's personal Narrative continued)

'I was received at the Convention with much cordiality by all the delegates, explained to them the views of the Canadian Government, and gave assurances that on entering the Confederation of Canada they would be secured in the possession of all rights, privileges, and immunities enjoyed by British subjects in other parts of the Dominion; but on being requested by Mr Riel to give an opinion regarding a certain "Bill of Rights" prepared by his party in December last, I declined to do so, thinking it better that the present Convention should place in my hands a paper stating their wishes, to which I should "be happy to give such assurances as I believed would be in accordance with the views of the Canadian Government."

'The Convention then set about the task of preparing a "List of Rights" embodying the conditions on which they would be willing to enter the Confederation. While the discussion regarding this list was going on, Mr Riel called on me and asked if the Canadian Government would consent to receive them as a Province. My reply was that I could not speak with any degree of certainty on the subject, as it had not been referred to me when I was at Ottawa, the intention then being that the North-West should in the first instance be incorporated under the Dominion as a territory; but I added that no doubt it would become a Province within two or three years.

'On this, Mr Riel, with much emphasis exclaimed, "Then the Hudson Bay Company is not safe yet!" To which I answered, "Mr Riel, that

cannot influence me in the slightest degree; I am quite prepared to act as may be required of me in my capacity as Canadian Commissioner." This was on the evening of the 3rd of February.

'On the following day the proposition that the Red River Settlement should enter into the Canadian Dominion as a Province was negatived by the Convention; and on the 5th another motion directed against the Hudson Bay Company also failed, the language used by Mr Riel on the latter occasion having been violent in the extreme. The same evening Riel proceeded to Governor Mac-tavish, who had been dangerously ill for many weeks back, and heaping reproaches and insult upon him, declared that he would have him shot before midnight.

'Riel then sought out Dr Cowan, the officer in immediate charge of Red River District, up-braided him for his persistent opposition to "the people," meaning the insurgents, and declaring that his name would go down with infamy to posterity for the part he had taken, demanded that he would immediately swear allegiance to the "Provisional Government" or prepare for death within three hours, giving him a quarter of an hour for consideration.

'The doctor immediately replied that he knew no legal authority in the country but that of Great Britain, to which his allegiance was due, and that he would not take the oath required of him. He was then seized and put in confinement along with the prisoners taken in December last. I was also put under strict charge, but not removed from the house.

'Notwithstanding these outrages and the painful doubts created in the minds of the English members of the Convention as to the course they should pursue, the delegates again met on the 7th. On the 5th they had placed in my hands the "List of Rights" they had drawn up, which was done at eleven o'clock on the 7th, with an intimation that the Convention would be glad to meet me at one o'clock p.m., the intervening two hours being allowed me to frame my answers.

'In drawing up these I was allowed no reference to any document, either written or printed, except the "List of Rights," and a guard stood over me to see that I should write nothing else than that to be presented to the Convention. I had just finished writing when Mr Riel came in with his Adjutant-General, and looking at the latter in a significant manner, said, "The answers to the 'List of Rights' must be simply 'yes' or 'no.' " On this I remarked that I felt otherwise, and would act as circumstances might appear to me to require. I then retired, and on returning to the room a few minutes later, found there Mr Riel, the Rev. Mr Thibault, and Colonel de Salaberry. We went together to the Convention, and in course of conversation Colonel de Salaberry said he would have gladly come to see me, but could not, as he had been a prisoner throughout.

'At the Convention a large majority of the delegates expressed entire satisfaction with the answers to their "List of Rights," and professed confidence in the Canadian Government, to which I invited them to send delegates with the view of effecting a speedy transfer of the territory to the

Dominion. The invitation was received with acclamation and unanimously accepted. The delegates named were John Black, Esq., Recorder, the Rev. Mr Richot, and Mr Alfred H. Scott, a good deal of opposition having been offered to the election of the last-named of the three.

'The proceedings of this Convention came to a close on the 10th of February. Governor Mac-tavish and Dr Cowan, and two or three other persons were then released, and the Hudson Bay Company's officers again allowed to come and go at pleasure; but I was still confined to the Fort. Riel stated expressly to Judge Black that he was apprehensive of my influence with the people in the approaching election; but promised that all the prisoners should soon be released. On the 11th and 12th six or eight of them were set at liberty, and Dr Cowan was informed in my presence that as they were all to be discharged without delay, the rooms they had occupied would be placed at his disposal in a day or two. Riel remarked at the same time that he would have them thoroughly cleaned out.'

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RISING AT PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

(Continuation of Mr Donald Smith's Narrative)

'RUMOURS now began to circulate of a rising against Riel's party at Portage la Prairie, a prominent post lying between the Red River and Lake Winnipegosis, a great lake only second in size in the district to Winnipeg, to which it is parallel. On the nights of the 14th and 15th of February, some eighty or one hundred men from that district passed down close to Fort Garry, where they were joined by from 300 to 350 men, principally English half-breeds from the lower parts of the settlement. Had these men, properly armed and organised, been prepared to support the well-affected French party, when the latter took action about the middle of January, or even in the middle of February, during the sitting of the Convention, order might have been restored, and the transfer to Canada provided for without the necessity of firing a single shot; but now the rising was not only rash but purposeless, as without its intervention the prisoners would unquestionably have been released. The party was entirely unorganised, indifferently armed, unprovided with

food, even for one meal, and wholly incapable of coping with the French, now reunited. To the number of at least 700 the French were prepared to offer the most determined resistance, which, as they were in possession of a number of guns (six and three pounders), ample stores of ammunition, provisions, and every other requisite, they could have done most effectually.

'My sympathies were, in a great measure, with the Portage men, whom I believe to have been actuated by the best of motives; but under the circumstances it was not difficult to foresee that the issue could not be otherwise than disastrous to their cause. The attempt was therefore to be deplored, as it resulted in placing the whole settlement at the feet of Riel.

'The great majority of settlers, English and Scotch, discountenanced the movement, and bitterly complained of those who had set it on foot. Forty-seven of the party—including Captain Boulton and Thomas Scott—were captured on their way home while passing within a few yards of the Fort. The explanation I have heard given for their otherwise inexplicable conduct in having taken this route, instead of making a detour which would have ensured safety, being a supposed promise by Riel that they would be permitted to pass unmolested. Their messenger on being questioned by Archdeacon M'Lean and myself, in the presence of one or two other gentlemen, admitted that Riel, on being asked if the party would be permitted to pass, was silent; and only on being informed that they intended next day to use the route just outside the town, remarked, "Ah, that

is good!" And for his purpose it, no doubt, was so.

'Captain Boulton was the leader of the party, and he and his friends at the Portage assured me that he exerted himself to the utmost to keep them from rising, and only joined them at the last moment when he saw they were determined to go forward. He was captured on the 17th, tried by court-martial, and condemned to be shot at noon on the following day; but at the intercession of the Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land, Archdeacon M'Lean, and, in short, of every influential man among the English, and, I have been told, also at the earnest entreaty of the Roman Catholic clergy, the execution was delayed till midnight of Saturday the 19th. Further than this, Riel declared that he could not, would not yield.

'Archdeacon M'Lean had been in close attendance on Captain Boulton for twenty-four hours, had administered to him the Sacrament, received his last commands, and had promised to be present with him at the last moment; and when I met the Archdeacon on my way to see Riel, about eight o'clock on the evening of the 19th, he was deeply affected, and had given up all hope.

'I found with Riel Mr H. N. Robinson of the *New Nation* newspaper; and shortly afterwards Mr James Ross, Chief Justice, entered, followed by Mr Bannatyne, Postmaster, who had been ordered to bring the key of the mail-bag, which Riel opened, and examining the letters, perused and retained one or more.

'Mr Ross pleaded for Boulton, but was repulsed in the most contemptuous manner. I had already

been speaking to Riel on the subject when interrupted by Mr Ross's entrance, and now resumed the conversation. Riel was obdurate, and said that the English settlers and Canadians, but more especially the latter, had laughed at and despised the French half-breeds, believing that they would not dare to take the life of any one, and that under these circumstances it would be impossible to have peace and establish order in the country. An example must therefore be made, and he had firmly resolved that Boulton's execution should be carried out, bitterly as he deplored the necessity for doing so.

'I reasoned with him long and earnestly, until at length, about ten o'clock, he yielded, and addressing me, apparently with much feeling, said :—

"Hitherto I have been deaf to all entreaties, and in now granting you this man's life, may I ask a favour?"

"Anything," I replied, "that in honour I can do."

"Canada has disunited us," he continued; "will you use your influence to unite us? You can do this, and without this it must be war—bloody civil war!"

'My answer was to repeat what I said on first entering Red River,—"I am ready to give my whole heart to effect a peaceful union of the country with Canada."

"We only want our just rights as British subjects," Riel went on, "and we want the English to join us simply to get these."

"Then," I remarked, "I shall at once see them

and induce them to go on with the election of delegates for that purpose."

"If you can do this," he replied, "war will be avoided. Not only the lives but the liberties of all the prisoners will be secured."

"He immediately proceeded to the prison and intimated to Archdeacon M'Lean that he had been induced by me to spare Captain Boulton's life, and had further promised to me that immediately on the meeting of the Council shortly to be elected the whole of the prisoners should be released. At the same time he requested the Archdeacon to explain these circumstances to Captain Boulton and the other prisoners.

"The moment was a fearful one for the settlement. Every man's life was in the hands of Riel and fully appreciating the significance of this, the Bishop of Rupert's Land, and the Protestant clergy generally, now earnestly counselled the people to elect their delegates without loss of time, as by this means they might to some extent control the course of events, while otherwise they were entirely powerless. I entirely concurred in this view of the case, and Archdeacon M'Lean having kindly offered to accompany me, we visited the different parts of the settlement, and found that in several parishes the people and those most loyal to the British Crown and most desirous for union with Canada had already chosen their councillors.

"I explained to all that the Council was intended expressly for effecting the transference of the country to Canada, and for ensuring the safety of life and property in the meantime. In some

instances I found that they had drawn up petitions to Mr Riel as "President," expressing submission, etc.

'These I requested them to destroy, advising that nothing more should be done than under the circumstances was absolutely necessary, namely, that having made their election, they should simply intimate the fact to the Secretary of the Council, and not to Mr Riel. The elections in the English parishes having taken place on the 26th February, I again saw Riel, who reassured me that all the prisoners would be released within a day or two after the first meeting of the Council. On the 28th he again sent for me, and repeated his promise that the lives of the prisoners were secure and that their release would shortly follow.'

CHAPTER XIX

A COLD-BLOODED MURDER

It will be well, here, to re-state the position of affairs in the Red River Settlement—now known as Manitoba—at the time when Mr Donald Smith was, by straight-dealing methods, endeavouring to influence the ambitious, unprincipled, and uncertain Riel. There were four parties at work: the Hudson Bay Company, not eager to relinquish their proprietary rights as traders in the territory, yet ready to fall in—as they did in 1869—with the idea of the union of Canada by relinquishing all charter and exclusive rights on receiving a payment from Canada of £300,000—a profitable bargain for the Dominion, seeing that the Red River Settlement of that time is the Manitoba of to-day.

Then there were the colonists asking for representative government, which meant union with Canada; the third of the four parties were the Independents (so called) working secretly for the Red River Settlement to be received at a price under the Stars and Stripes of the American Union; and there was the inflammable fourth party the descendants of the old Nor'-Westers, French Métis all of them, led by Riel, the miller's

son, wondering restlessly what their part was to be in the reorganisation. They and their fathers had found this land and explored it and ranged its prairies from time immemorial. Who had better right than they to this country? Compared to them the Scotch settlers were as new-comers. The Métis rallied to Riel's standard to protect their rights whichever of the other parties came uppermost in the struggle. Poor children they were of the free wilderness life for ever past. Their leader was unworthy, and their stand a vain endeavour against the resistless tide of a united Dominion.

To continue Mr Donald Smith's Narrative:—

'I had no further communication with Riel until Monday, the 4th of March, when about ten o'clock in the morning Père Lestanc called on me. He informed me of Bishop (afterwards Archbishop) Taché's expected arrival—not later certainly than the 8th, and probably some days earlier—adding that his lordship had telegraphed to request that if about to leave for Canada I would defer my departure till he could communicate personally with me.¹ He (Père Lestanc) then said that "the conduct of the prisoners was very unsatisfactory, that they were unruly, insolent to the 'soldiers,' and their behaviour altogether so very

¹ Archbishop Taché, the wise and gentle Roman Catholic prelate, with his Cathedral Church at St Boniface's in the Red River Settlement, loved the French Canadians who were under his spiritual charge, and the services he rendered to the land and race can never be forgotten. Chiefly through his instrumentality an amnesty had been promised to those who had taken part in the insurrection, and the troubles would have come to an end had not Riel, in a moment of recklessness characteristic of his real nature, cut himself off from consideration by his action towards Thomas Scott. It was to the Archbishop that Riel owed his admission to the College at Montreal with a view to taking Holy Orders.

bad that he was afraid the guards might be forced to retaliate in self-defence."

'I expressed much surprise at the information he gave, as the prisoners, without exception, had promised to Archdeacon M'Lean and myself that, seeing their helpless position, they would endeavour to act so as to avoid giving offence to their guards, and we encouraged them to look forward to be speedily released in fulfilment of the promise made by Mr Riel.

'About eleven o'clock Père Lestanc left me and went upstairs to communicate to Governor Mactavish what he termed "the good news that Bishop Taché was expected soon." The Rev. Mr Young, Methodist clergyman, had just entered the house, and meeting the Père in the hall, conversed with him for a few minutes. Mr Young then came up to me, and from him I had the first intimation that it was intended to shoot Thomas Scott (a leader in the Portage la Prairie rising), and that the sentence was to be carried into effect at twelve o'clock noon that day. We agreed in believing that this thing was too monstrous to be possible, and Mr Young said that poor Scott himself was equally incredulous on the subject, thinking they merely intended to frighten him.

'However, even to keep him in suspense was a horrible cruelty, and it was arranged that as Mr Young had been sent for to attend the man, he should see Riel, ascertain exactly how the matter stood, and if really serious let me know at once. Mr Young accordingly called on Riel, was informed that Scott had been condemned, that the sentence was irrevocable, and would not be delayed one

minute beyond noon. Mr Young begged for delay, saying that the man was not prepared to die; but all without avail. He was paralysed with horror, returned to the prisoner, and immediately sent a messenger to inform me of the result of his visit.

'I determined to find out Riel immediately, but recollecting that Père Lestanc was still upstairs with Mr Mactavish, went to him, related what I had heard, and asked him if he knew anything about the matter. His answer was to the effect that they had seen Mr Riel and had all spoken to him about it; by which I understood that they had interceded for Scott. Governor Mactavish was greatly shocked on being informed of Riel's purpose and joined in reprobating it.

'Père Lestanc consented to accompany me, and we called on Riel. When we entered he asked me, "What news from Canada?" The mail had arrived on the preceding day, and I replied, "Only the intelligence that Bishop Taché will be here very soon." I then mentioned what I had heard regarding Scott, and before Riel answered, Père Lestanc interposed in French words meaning, "Is there no way of escape?" Riel replied to him, "My Rev. Père, you know exactly how the matter stands"; then turning to me he said, "I will explain to you," speaking at first in English, but shortly afterwards using the French, remarking to me, "You understand that language?"

'He said in substance that Scott had been throughout a dangerous character, had been the ringleader in a rising against Mr Snow, who had charge of the party employed by the Canadian

Government, during the preceding summer, in road-making; that he had risen against the "Provisional Government" in December last; that his life was then spared; that he escaped, had again been taken in arms, and once more pardoned (referring, no doubt, to the promise he had made to me that the lives and liberty of all the prisoners were secured); but that he was incorrigible and quite incapable of appreciating the clemency with which he had been treated; that he was rough and abusive to the guards, and insulting to him, Mr Riel; that his example had been productive of the very worst effects on the other prisoners, who had become insubordinate to such an extent that it was difficult to withhold the guards from retaliating.

He further said, "I sat down with Scott as we are doing now, and asked him truthfully to tell me—as I would not use his statement against him—what he and the Portage people intended to have done with me had they succeeded in capturing me," to which he replied, "We intended to keep you as a hostage for the safety of the prisoners." I argued with Riel, and endeavoured to show that some of the circumstances he had mentioned, and especially the last, were very strong reasons to urge why Scott's life should not be sacrificed, and that if, as he represented, Scott was a rash, thoughtless man, whom none cared to have anything to do with, no evil need be apprehended from his example. I pointed out that the one great merit claimed for the insurrection was that it had been bloodless; I implored him not now to stain it, not to burden it with what would be considered a horrible crime.

"We must make Canada respect us!" he exclaimed.

"She has every proper respect for the people of the Red River," I replied, "and this is shown in her having sent Commissioners to treat with them."

"I told him I had seen the prisoners some time back, when they commissioned me to say to their friends at Portage that they desired peace, and I offered to go to them again and reason with them should that be necessary. On this he said,—

"Look here, Mr Smith, I sent a representative to see the prisoners, and when he asked them whom they would vote for as councillors outside their own body, Thomas Scott came forward and said, 'Boys, have nothing to do with those Americans.'"

"When I remarked that this was a most trifling affair, and should not have been repeated, Riel said, 'Do not attempt to prejudice us against the Americans; for although we have not been with them, they are with us, and have been better friends to us than the Canadians.'"

"Much more was said on both sides, but argument, entreaty, and protest alike failed to draw him from his purpose, and he closed by saying,—

"I have done three good things since I commenced: I have spared Boulton's life at your instance, and I do not regret it, for he's a fine fellow; I pardoned another one, and he showed his gratitude by escaping, but I don't grudge him his miserable life; and now I shall shoot Scott."

'The Adjutant-General now entered; he was president of the council of seven which tried Scott, five of whom, Riel told me, "with tears streaming from their eyes, condemned him as worthy of death," a sentence which he had confirmed. In answer to Riel the Adjutant said, "Scott must die." Riel then requested the Rev. Père Lestanc to put the people on their knees for prayer, as it might do good to the condemned man's soul. Deferring to Père Lestanc, and making a final appeal, unnecessary here to repeat, I retired.

'It was now within a few minutes of one o'clock, and on entering the Governor's house, the Rev. Mr Young joined me and said, "It is now considerably past the hour, I trust you have succeeded."

"No," I said; "for God's sake go back at once to the poor man, for I fear the worst."

'He left immediately, and a few minutes after entering the room in which the prisoner was confined some guards marched in and told Scott that his hour had come. Not until then did the reality of his position flash upon poor Scott. He said good-bye to the other prisoners, was led outside the gate of the Fort with a white handkerchief covering his head; his coffin having a piece of white cotton thrown over it, was carried out.

'His eyes were then bandaged; he continued in prayer, in which he had been engaged on the way, for a few minutes. He asked Mr Young how he should place himself, whether standing or kneeling; then knelt in the snow, said farewell, and immediately fell back, pierced by three bullets. The firing party consisted of six men, all of whom, it is said, were more or less intoxicated. It has

been further stated that only three of the muskets were loaded with ball cartridge, and that one man did not discharge his piece. Mr Young turned aside when the first shots were fired, then went back to the body, and again retired for a moment, while a man discharged his revolver at the sufferer, the ball, it is said, entering the eye and passing round the head.

'The wounded man groaned between the time of receiving the musket shots and the discharge of the revolver. Mr Young asked to have the remains for interment in the burying-ground of the Presbyterian Church, but this was not acceded to, and a similar request, preferred by the Bishop of Rupert's Land, was also refused. He was buried within the walls of the Fort.

'It is said that on descending the steps leading from the prison poor Scott, addressing Mr Young, said, "This is a cold-blooded murder," then he engaged in prayer, and was so occupied until he was shot.'

CHAPTER XX

DONALD SMITH LEAVES RED RIVER

(Conclusion of Mr Donald Smith's Narrative)

'AFTER this event I held no communication whatsoever with Riel, except in reference to getting away from the country, which I was not allowed to leave without a pass. I felt that under the circumstances it was not desirable that I should remain longer at Red River, but it was not until a fortnight later that Riel gave permission for my departure. Although not accomplishing all that could have been desired, the mission to the Red River, as I shall endeavour to show in a few words, has been productive of some good; and that it was not entirely successful may fairly be attributed to the circumstances I have described. Success, although in a lesser degree, might also have been gained at a later period, but for the rising in February, which, though rash and productive of results the most unfortunate, I can hardly blame, knowing, as already stated, that those who took part in it were actuated and impelled by generous motives.

'On reaching Red River in December last, I found the English-speaking portion of the inhabitants greatly divided in opinion as to the

comparative advantages of union with Canada and the formation of a Crown Colony, while a few favoured annexation to the United States. The explanations offered on the part of Canada, the people generally received as satisfactory, and with hardly a dissentient voice they would now vote for the immediate transfer to the Dominion. They earnestly requested me to assure His Excellency the Governor-General of their warm loyalty to the British Crown.

'The case is difficult as regards the French half-breeds. A not inconsiderable number of them remained true to their allegiance during all the troubles through which they have had to pass; and with these will now be found associated many others whose minds had for a time been poisoned by gross misrepresentation made by designing men for their own selfish ends.

'A knowledge of the true state of the case, and of the advantages they would derive from union with Canada, had been carefully kept from them, and they were told to judge of Canadians generally by the acts and bearing of some of the less reflective immigrants who had denounced them as "cumberers of the ground" who must speedily make way for the "superior race" about to pour in upon them.

'It is also too true that in the unauthorised proceedings of some of the recent Canadian arrivals some plausible ground had been given for the feeling of jealousy and alarm with which the contemplated change of government was regarded by the native population. In various localities these adventurers had been industriously marking

off for themselves considerable, and in some ways very extensive and exceptionally valuable tracts of land, thereby impressing the minds of the people with the belief that the time had come when in their own country they were to be entirely supplanted by the stranger. No such operations should have been begun until Canada had fully explained her policy and shown the groundlessness of these fears.

‘Let us further bear in mind that many of the Catholic clergymen are not French-Canadians, but Frenchmen, and consequently it may be presumed, not very conversant with British laws and institutions and with the liberty and privileges enjoyed under them. Warmly attached to their flocks, they deemed it necessary to exact some guarantee that in their new political condition they would not be treated with injustice. The breach widened, until at length it attained a magnitude and significance little dreamt of in the commencement, even by those who joined most heartily in the movement.

‘It is far more pleasing to be able to state, which I do with much confidence, that a large majority of the French party have no misgivings as to union with Canada, and that, joined by and under the guidance of his lordship, Bishop Taché, and other members of the clergy, who enjoy their confidence, they will shortly prove themselves to be staunch supporters of the Dominion, firm in their allegiance to England.

‘In the course of the insurrection one deplorable crime and many grossly illegal acts have unquestionably been committed, but it would be alike

unpolitic and unjust to charge them to the French population generally.

'Much obloquy has been heaped on the Hudson Bay Company and their Governor and officers in the North-West, which can be readily and satisfactorily answered and refuted, although I do not consider it necessary at this moment to do so. Errors, many and grave, have, it cannot be denied, been committed on all sides; but wilful and intentional neglect of duty cannot, I feel convinced, be laid to the charge either of the Hudson Bay Company or their representatives in the country. Personally, I have been entirely unconnected with the administration of affairs in that department.

'I would respectfully submit that it is of the utmost importance that there should be a strong military force in the North-West as early as practicable. The minds of the Indians, especially the tribes in the Saskatchewan country, have been so perplexed and confused by the occurrences of the past six months that it would be very unsafe to trust to their forbearance; and, indeed, until the question of Indian claims has been finally settled, it would not, in my opinion, be prudent to leave the country unprotected by a military force. The adjustment of those claims will require early attention, and some memoranda and evidence in my hands on the subject I shall, if desired, be prepared to lay before the Government.'

Speaking long afterwards of these eventful experiences at Fort Garry, Mr Smith said,—

'The mission on which I went at that time was a most delicate and difficult one. It was one of

no ordinary difficulty, and I felt great responsibility at the time; I felt the part I had to act was that of mediator, and I believe that was the desire of the Government at Ottawa. It was not to raise up strife and bad feeling, but to assure the people that they would be received into the Dominion on equitable, liberal terms, and to endeavour to keep the settlement quiet and peaceable until such time as the Canadian Government would be in a position to send a force into the country. This it was which I endeavoured to carry out. Not only would one rash and unguarded word have increased the difficulty, but even the pointing of a finger might, on more than one occasion, have been sufficient to put the whole country into a flame.'

'No one,' he informed the Canadian House of Commons later on, 'can deplore more than I do that a single life should have been lost, but I have since returned thanks most fervently that it was not a thousand-fold worse under the circumstances. I believe that had a different course been pursued we should have seen the destruction of hundreds, perhaps of a quarter or half of the population.'

Notwithstanding the high character of the public service he had rendered at Fort Garry, two years elapsed before he received the formal thanks of the Government. Whatever the reason for the delay it did not arise from want of appreciation, as the following selections from the Governor-General's letter will show:—

'The Governor-General feels that the important services you rendered to the country in your capacity as Special Commissioner to the North-West have not yet received the official recognition

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to which they are justly entitled. The Governor-General regards with high appreciation the patriotism with which you placed your services at the disposal of the Government, and at an inclement season of the year cheerfully undertook a long and fatiguing journey to Fort Garry to aid, by your presence and influence in the repression of the unlooked-for disturbance which had unhappily broken out in the North-West.

'Subsequent events have, in His Excellency's opinion, fully justified the wisdom of his selection of a Commissioner, for if the serious dangers which then threatened the settlement were happily averted, and law and order peacefully re-established at Fort Garry, His Excellency feels that the result was in no small degree due to the ability, discretion, and firmness with which you executed your commission, and to the judicious use of the influence which your character and standing enabled you to exercise over all classes of the community at Red River.'

CHAPTER XXI

THE FALL OF RIEL

THE murder of Thomas Scott, a native of Ontario, aroused a widespread feeling of indignation. The amnesty which was promised to Bishop Taché, it is now quite clear, never contemplated the pardon of a crime like that. The Canadian Government were by this time fully alive to a sense of their responsibilities, and at once decided to act with resolution. In the spring of 1870 an expedition was organised under the command of a young officer, Colonel Garnet Wolseley, whose brilliant qualities were destined to win him a peerage and the command of the British Army.

Young Wolseley had here the best of opportunities of gaining experience in the way of overcoming the most obstinate difficulties; and modern military books record his triumphs over obstacles that would have dismayed a less resolute mind. Through the dense forests there were but few roads, and those of the roughest description; the boats provided were leaky; the rapids terrifying to those unaccustomed to them. Alike to leaders and led, the military operations were of the most trying kind.

At Fort Alexander, close to the southern shore of Lake Winnipeg, within ninety miles of Riel's headquarters at Fort Garry, Donald Smith awaited the coming of the expedition he had himself suggested. When it arrived it was his intention to accompany it to its destination. The force, which consisted of five hundred regulars and seven hundred Canadian volunteers, took three months to accomplish the wearisome journey through an entirely unsettled and rough country, and it was not until nightfall of 20th August that the troops reached Fort Alexander and were welcomed by Mr Smith who had been informed by Indian couriers of their approach.

Concerning the troubles experienced by this expeditionary force one of the party wrote,— 'Some accidents had occurred, and many had been the close shaves of rock and rapid, but no life had been lost. From the six hundred miles of wilderness there emerged twelve hundred soldiers, whose muscles and sinews, taxed and tested by continuous toil, had been developed to a pitch of excellence seldom equalled, and whose experience and physique browned, tanned, and powerful, told of the glorious climate of these northern solitudes.'

It was towards sunset, nearly always in these regions a time of glory surpassing description, when the troops reached Fort Alexander. The writer we have just quoted, a volunteer in the expedition, says,— 'Heaven send that if any one who travels in this region be a lover of nature his face may be turned towards the sunset. He

will see such a sight, as we did on approaching the neighbourhood of Winnipeg, that eloquence becomes a suppliant for something beyond the highest gifts of language to adequately describe it. One sees, above the vanished sun, a blaze of golden yellow, thinned into a tone that is luminous crystal. This, when a few clouds are present to take on celestial dyes, is flanked by belts of ruby red, and all melt towards the zenith into a rich rose-tone at the base, paling at top into a mere blush. Sky effects of this kind we often saw at sunset, during our march from Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg, on water, plain, and mountain, and they were there to welcome us, suffusing the whole landscape, when we reached Fort Alexander.'

Mr Smith entertained the officers at dinner that evening, and had much to say to Colonel Wolseley whom he knew well as Deputy Quartermaster-General in Canada; while among those whom he met for the first time were two young officers destined to rise to high rank in the British Army: one was young Captain Buller, a bluff, hearty Devonian, and the other, Lieutenant Butler, a clever and brave Irishman. They were to be famous in the future as General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., and General Sir William Butler, K.C.B.

The night was spent at the Fort, and next morning the whole force embarked in large canoes for the Island of Elks, near the southern shore of Lake Winnipeg. 'That night,' the historian records, 'an encampment was made, a hundred fires were lit, and the bugle notes of

the sentries startled the solitudes.' At noon on the following day, the little army arrived at the mouth of the Red River, and after another day Colonel Wolseley, Mr Commissioner Smith, and their companions found themselves within six miles of Fort Garry. All that day the river banks had been alive with people shouting welcome to the soldiers; even church bells rang out peals of gladness as the boats passed by. But this was through the English and Scotch settlement, the people of which had grown disgusted with the tyranny of Louis Riel, the Dictator and 'New Napoleon.'

On reaching the mouth of the Red River, Mr Smith was told by his friends of the course of events at Fort Garry. Riel, though his influence was not so strong as in the early stages of the rebellion, was still a power within the Fort; and so great were the awe and dread excited by his domineering and forceful character that many feared he would not be torn from power without doing some evil and fearful thing.

'I hope you will induce Colonel Wolseley,' said one of Mr Smith's friends, 'to exercise the greatest caution. Riel is a desperate man and meditates, you may depend upon it, some desperate act. If he is not now planning a fatal ambush for the troops he intends to mine the fort, allow the Colonel to take possession of it, and then blow it up.'

Without believing for a moment that Riel would dare, in the presence of a British force, to go to extremes, Mr Smith felt it his duty to relate the

warning to Colonel Wolseley, and the surrounding woods were closely searched without revealing any sign of threatened danger. The troops camped for the night on the banks of Red River, and for them it was an experience of utter misery.

A storm of rain and wind broke upon the expedition, till the tents flapped and fell, and the drenched soldiers shivered, shelterless, waiting for the dawn. The occupants of tents which stood the pelting of the pitiless storm were no better off than those outside; the surface of the ground became ankle-deep in snow and water, and the men lay in pools during the last hours of the night. At length a dismal daylight dawned over the cheerless scene, and the upward course of the stream was resumed.

Towards midday the troops disembarked to attack Fort Garry, and over the prairie marched the little army with its two brass guns, every care having been taken to prevent intelligence of the movement being brought to Riel's ears. But the troops had not proceeded far when some mounted skirmishers, who had been sent on in advance, rode back to say that the gate at Fort Garry was open, that the place seemed empty, that no flag floated from the flagstaff. Side by side at the front of the troops Mr Commissioner Smith and Colonel Wolseley rode into the Fort to find that Riel had fled and that a bloodless victory had been won.

What had happened in the time has been described by Mr Beckles Willson who tells us that in some manner, Riel, O'Donoghue (who

had left the priesthood to throw in his lot with the rebels), and Lepine—the 'Provisional Government' as they termed themselves—had been warned that the dreaded red-coats were close at hand. One of the conspirators afterwards said that, on receiving the intelligence, Riel turned pale and trembled like a man with a palsy.

'It is too late now to make any defence,' he cried. 'We must fly now, and make terms afterwards.'

No amnesty having been proclaimed, he doubtless feared the result of capture by the military authorities. Three horses, we learn from Mr Willson's vivid narrative, were instantly made ready, and the trio of rebel leaders sprang upon their backs and rode away. The only eye-witness of their departure not implicated in their proceedings, was a veteran Hudson Bay factor who had recently arrived at the Fort from the Saskatchewan country.

Close to Fort Garry was a ferry worked by means of a stout rope or hawser. Entering this and reaching the opposite bank, Riel, or one of his companions, cut the rope, so preventing any immediate pursuit. Then the three conspirators, who had brought a force of red-coated British soldiery six thousand miles from the seat of the Empire to quell a rebellion, took up their position on the opposite shores of St Boniface, and viewed from this safe position Colonel Wolseley, Commissioner Smith, and the detachment of the 60th Regiment march into Fort Garry.—

When Riel saw Mr Smith enter the Fort he clenched his fist and exclaimed, 'There goes the man who upset my plans!' Then, remounting their horses, he and his friends rode off to find a refuge across the frontier of the United States.

The rebellion was over, happily without any collision between the soldiers and the supporters of the 'Provisional Government.' Henceforth Louis Riel and his co-conspirators, helpless and in exile, exercised but little influence upon the fortunes of Manitoba. Later, as we shall see, Riel returned as a rebel leader, but for years the land was free from his presence.

CHAPTER XXII

RIEL'S FATE

LAW and order, to quote from Sir J. G. Bourinot's *Canada*, henceforth prevailed in the new territory, whose formal transfer to the Canadian Government had been already completed, and it was now established as a new province, called Manitoba, with a complete system of local government, including guarantees with respect to education, as in the case of the old provinces.

The first Lieutenant-Governor was the Hon. Adams G. Archibald, a wise and sensible statesman of high repute. Mr Smith strongly approved the appointment and gave him a cordial welcome at Fort Garry.

'I yield up to you my responsibilities with pleasure,' said Mr Smith as he greeted him.

'Yes,' replied the new Lieutenant-Governor; 'but I really do not anticipate much pleasure on my own account.'

His words were only too true an anticipation, as we shall see, of the difficulties that lay before him.

At the same time that Mr Archibald was appointed, representation was also given to the new State in the two houses of the Dominion

Parliament. In the course of a few years the handsome, well-built city of Winnipeg, the greatest grain market in the Empire, arose on the site of old Fort Garry, which in Lord Strathcona's remembrance received letters only twice a year, brought by dog-sleigh and canoe. With the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway—a national highway built with a rapidity remarkable even in these days of extraordinary commercial enterprise—and the connection of the Atlantic seaboard with the Pacific shores, villages and towns have extended at distant intervals across the continent. Stone and brick buildings of fine architectural proportions, streets lit by electricity and well paved, huge stores and busy mills, are the characteristics of towns where only yesterday brooded silence, and where the vast flowery stretches of prairie were crushed only by the feet of wandering Indians and half-breeds.

Fourteen years after the formation of the Province of Manitoba, while the Canadian Pacific Railway was in course of construction, the territories were again disturbed by risings of half-breeds. Many of these men had migrated from Manitoba to a country where they could follow their occupation of hunting and fishing, and till little patches of ground in the shiftless manner characteristic of the *Métis*.

Conscious that they might be crowded out by the energy and enterprise of white settlers—that they could no longer depend on their means of livelihood as in the past, when the buffalo and other game were plentiful, these restless, impulsive, illiterate people were easily led to believe that their

only chance of redressing their real or fancied wrongs was in such a rising as had taken place on the Red River in 1869.

The agitators among the half-breeds succeeded in bringing Riel back to the country to lead the proposed insurrection. He had been an exile since 1869, and was at the time serving as a teacher in Montana, one of the States of America in the Rocky Mountains district. After the rebellion he had been induced to keep out of the country by bribes paid to him from the secret-service fund of the Canadian Government, a method of dealing with a troublesome insurgent that can only be understood by a knowledge of the vastness of the territory and the difficulty, owing to distances, in settling even the slightest disturbances.

In 1874, Riel had been elected to the Canadian House of Commons by the new constituency of Provencher in Manitoba; but as he had been proclaimed an outlaw when a true Bill for murder was found against him in the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench, and as he had failed to appear for trial, his election was made void by a vote of the House.

Lepine, a member of Riel's so called 'Provisional Government' at Red River, had been tried and convicted for his share in the murder of Scott; but Lord Dufferin, when Governor - General, exercised the prerogative of royal clemency, as an imperial officer, and commuted the punishment to two years' imprisonment.

In this way the Government were relieved for the time of a serious responsibility which they were

anxious to avoid; for they were between two fires. On the one hand were the people of Ontario anxious to punish the murderers with every severity; and on the other were the French-Canadians, the majority of whom showed a lively sympathy with all those who had taken part in the rebellion of 1869.

The influence of French Canada was also seen in the full amnesty granted to all concerned in the rebellion, with the exception of Riel, Lepine, and O'Donoghue, who were banished for five years. Riel and his associates, strengthened by a knowledge of their popularity in French Canada, and thinking that from the clemency shown to them they had little to fear from the consequences of anything they did, cheerfully undertook the leadership of a rebellion on the Saskatchewan, a noble river which rises in the Rocky Mountains and after a course of over a thousand miles flows into the northern end of Lake Winnipeg.

Riel and Dumont—the latter a half-breed—led the successful attack in March, 1885, when the Mounted Police and Prince Albert Volunteers were defeated with loss of life. This success caused a number of Indian tribes to go on the war-path, and several persons, including two missionaries, were massacred. Fort Pitt, on the North Saskatchewan, threatened by a large force of Indians under a chief named Big Bear, had to be abandoned by the detachment of Mounted Police in charge of it, under the command of Inspector Dickens, a son of the novelist.

When the news of these outrages reached Ottawa, the Government acted with promptitude.

From all parts of the Dominion—from French as well as English Canada—volunteers rallied to the call of duty, and Major-General Middleton, a regular officer in command of the Canadian Militia, led a force of over four thousand men into the North-West. The Canadian Pacific Railway, with the exception of a few breaks of about seventy miles in all, was now built as far as Qu'Appelle, which is sixteen hundred and twenty miles from Ottawa and about two hundred and thirty miles from Batoche, the centre of the disaffected district. Less than a month from the time of starting, the Canadian troops, including a fine body of men from Winnipeg, reached Fish Creek, fifteen miles from Batoche. Here they received a check, for the insurgents, concealing themselves in rifle-pits ingeniously constructed and placed in a deep ravine, shot down a considerable number of the Volunteers. A day or two later, at Batoche, the Canadian troops scattered the insurgents, who never made an attempt to rally—among the captured was Riel.

When the insurrection was over an example was made of the leaders. Riel was executed after a most impartial trial, in which he had the assistance of able counsel brought from French Canada. Insanity was pleaded, as a last resource, in his defence, not only in the court, but subsequently in the House of Commons at Ottawa, when it was attempted to censure the Canadian Government for the stern action they had taken. Sir John Macdonald was Premier, and every possible effort was made to force him to obtain the pardon of Riel. In his determination not to weaken the

authority of law in the West, he received unflinching support from his French-Canadian colleagues, who exhibited no small degree of courage in resisting the passionate and even menacing appeals of their fellow-countrymen.

Happily, in the course of no long time, the racial antagonisms raised by this unhappy episode in the early history of the Canadian Confederation disappeared under the influence of wiser counsels, and the peace of this immense region has never since been threatened by Indians or half-breeds, who have now few, if any, grievances over which to brood.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CANADIAN HALF-BREEDS

THE story of the half-breeds cannot be omitted in any account of the career of Lord Strathcona. During his life in Canada he was in close touch with them; it was his ceaseless endeavour to do justice to them amidst the conflicting interests of rival nationalities. In no inconsiderable measure was it due to his wise influence among these interesting people—particularly the French section—that bitterness and discord became hushed in the happy fusion of every section of the community into one vast and prosperous Dominion from ocean to ocean. It was formerly the custom of the factors in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company to send to London, to the head office, for a wife to be added to the annual consignment of goods; although there were not a few who sent to the Highlands of Scotland for the sweethearts they had left behind them there. But in time the custom grew to choose wives among the Indian squaws.

In doing this, not even the first among them acted blindly, for their old rivals and subsequent companions of the North-West Company—mostly Frenchmen—had begun the custom, and French

roamers of the forests and woods had mated with Indian women before there was a Hudson Bay Company. These rough and hardy woodsmen, and a large number of half-breeds born of such alliances, began at an early day to settle near the trading posts. Sometimes they established what might be called villages, but which were really close imitations of Indian camps.

The Europeans saw that these women were docile, or easily kept in order by floggings with the tent poles; that they were faithful and industrious, and, from the Indian point of view, not wanting in comeliness. Therefore it came to pass that these alliances were frequent all over the fur-trading country.

The consequences of this custom proved important. In Canada the white man made his bow to the redskin as a brother in the truest sense. The old hunters of Norman or Breton stock, loving a wild, free life, and in complete sympathy with the Indians, bought or took the squaws to wife, learned the Indian dialect, and shared their food and adventures with the tribes. There thus grew up a class of half-breeds who spoke English and French, and were as much at home with the savages as with the whites. From this stock the Hudson Bay men have had, for more than a century, a better choice of wives.

These inter-marriages tended to a spirit of friendliness between the red and white men, the happy result being that, at such periods as Riel's rebellion at Red River, the Indians remained quiet, unwilling to go on the warpath against the race that had taken so many of their women

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to wife; indeed, it was their custom to warn the white men of anything that was being planned against them. The Indians who committed the massacres in the Saskatchewan district during Riel's second rebellion belonged to tribes from whom the Canadians had never chosen a wife. It is in this marriage link between the Europeans and the red people, and the just policy always insisted upon by Mr Donald Smith in the dealings between the Hudson Bay men and the Indians, that we find the reason for Canada's enviable experiences with the native races.

The half-breed has developed with the growth of Canada. There are now half-breeds *and* half-breeds; some of them are titled, and others hold high official places. It occurred to an English peer, about twenty years ago, while he was being entertained in a Government house in Canada, to inquire of his host :—

'What are these half-breeds I hear about? I should like to see what one looks like.'

'I am one,' was the reply.

Every one who has travelled much in Western Canada has now and then been entertained in homes where either the man or the woman of the household was of mixed blood; and in such homes a high degree of refinement has frequently been found. Often at first sight the presence of Indian blood does not assert itself; but closer observation reveals it in the peculiar black hair or certain distinctive facial features.

The social position and attainments of these half-breeds, or descendants of half-breeds, have been considerably influenced by the nationality

of their fathers. The French, for instance, far too often sink to the level of their wives when they marry Indian women. Light-hearted, careless, and unambitious, fond of gambling, they, in many instances, are not held in check by responsibility and concern in home life, and their careers are a downward drift. Of course this is not the rule, but rather the tendency.

On the other hand, the Scotch and English in very many cases force the wife up to their own level. Their home training, respect for more than the forms of religion, their love of home and of a permanent patch of ground of their own, all have their effect for good in preventing moral decay. Thus half-breed children have been reared in comfortable homes, sent out to mix with the children of cultivated people, carefully trained, and given an equal start with the highest and the best in the journey of life. In this respect it is worthy of note that Pauline Johnson, one of the most brilliant of Canadian poets, was a half-breed.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE RISE OF MANITOBA

WHEN Colonel Wolseley entered Fort Garry, the centre of the vast and richly productive district soon to be famous under the name of Manitoba, he found himself in the novel position of a Military Commander in a district that had no civil authority. Unwilling to rule by martial law, he wisely came to the conclusion that until the arrival of Mr Archibald, the newly-appointed Lieutenant Governor, the only possible civil authority was Mr Donald Smith; and although the Hudson Bay Company had sold to the Canadian Government for £300,000 their rights over the territory, he held that, pending the appearance on the scene of Mr Archibald, the right person to administer affairs was Governor Smith. Forthwith that gentleman was appointed to the temporary office much to the general satisfaction. People gratefully remembered the fairness and wisdom he had shown in his dealings with rival and heated factions during Riel's dictatorship, and by all classes of the community he was trusted and honoured.

Over Fort Garry the Union Jack was hoisted, a royal salute was fired in the open space in the

centre of the settlement, and when the cheers from troops and civilians had subsided, Mr Smith, addressing the assembly with his usual felicity of clear and sensible expression, said :—

‘Gentlemen, it lies in ourselves to continue the work of pacification now so auspiciously begun. Let us all strive to banish discord and to make this new province a credit to the Dominion of Canada.’

On the 2nd of September, Lieutenant-Governor Archibald arrived, and four days later he entertained at dinner in Government House, Colonel Wolseley and Mr Smith, for the last time. Next morning Wolseley started for Ottawa with the 60th Rifles, artillery, and engineers, leaving behind for purposes of defence the Ontario and Quebec battalions.

All the time the French populace, whose sympathies had been with Riel, looked on coldly and with suspicion. That the embers of mistrust might at any time burst into flame is shown by the following letter from Archbishop Taché, received by Mr Smith less than a week before the arrival of Lieutenant-Governor Archibald :—

‘THE PALACE,
‘ST. BONIFACE.

‘DEAR MR DONALD SMITH,—I am told that special constables have been sworn in the name of peace for the security and welfare of the country. I humbly beg that these constables (as well as the Magistrates and Justices of the Peace) will not be used except to maintain the tranquillity against

actual movements or disturbances, and that all and every one will refuse to act in reference to anything previous to the arrival of Her Majesty's troops in Fort Garry. I see a real danger in the gathering by you of a number of the same men you employed last winter; with the best will in the world you cannot have a fair idea of the disposition of the different sections of the community.'

In a note on the subject made some time later, Mr Smith said :—'The men here referred to were those called "loyal French," and the Archbishop was apprehensive that, as these men had assisted me in getting up meetings throughout the country, and in enabling me to make the explanations which I was desired by the Canadian Government to make, there would be danger of a collision.'

A few days later the Archbishop wrote to Mr Archibald to the same effect; but there was no possibility that either Mr Smith or the new Governor would use the civil or military power as engines of punishment for past events; on the contrary, they had gone to the opposite extreme in supporting the scheme for allowing, and even assisting, the rebel leaders to escape from the country.

Those in Manitoba who had favoured the insurrection were daily dreading punishment, and were sullen, uneasy, and discontented, while the English-speaking class regarded the new authority as showing favour to malcontents, and extending unmerited sympathy to the French populace.

Mr Archibald, as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, and Mr Smith previously, had each earnestly striven to hold the balance evenly between the

parties, to try to forget the past, and work with hope and earnest purpose for a brighter and happier future.

Writing on the subject to the Premier (Sir John Macdonald), Governor Archibald said :—

‘If the Dominion has at this time a province to defend and not one to conquer, they owe it to the policy of forbearance. If I had driven the French half-breeds into the hands of the enemy, their leaders would have been joined by all the population between the Assiniboine and the frontier; Fort Garry would have passed into the hands of an armed mob, and the English settlers to the north of the Assiniboine (Manitoba) would have suffered horrors which make me shudder to contemplate.’

Manitoba, now an integral part of the Dominion of Canada, had to undergo the throes of elections, local and imperial. The elections to the first Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba took place, December 30, 1870. Mr Smith stood for Winnipeg (Fort Garry) and duly took his seat.

Two months later, Manitoba had to choose four Members to represent it in the Dominion House of Commons at Ottawa, and Mr Smith was invited to stand as a candidate for the division of Selkirk. The invitation expressed the high opinion formed of his personal character, and the gratitude in which his public services to the new province were held. He consented to become a candidate, delivered a series of vigorous addresses in various parts of the division, and was elected by a large majority.

With what vigour of purpose and excited feelings

these elections were conducted will be understood by the description given in the picturesque pages of the *Wild North Land* :—

‘Representative institutions had been established in the new province of Manitoba, and an election for Members of Parliament had just been concluded. Of this triumph of modern liberty over primeval savagery it is sufficient to say that the great principles of freedom of election had been fully vindicated by a large body of upright citizens, who, in the most free and independent manner, had forcibly possessed themselves of the poll booths, and then fired a volley from revolvers, or, in the language of the land, emptied their “shooting-irons” into another body of equally upright citizens, who had the temerity to differ from them as to the choice of a political representative.’

Much had happened since the day that Mr Smith had set out fifteen months earlier from Montreal for Fort Garry to act as Commissioner for the Canadian Government. ‘Little did he dream,’ writes Mr Beckles Willson in his graphic biography, ‘of the possibilities in store for him, less did he think of personal honours. He had gone out amidst the snows of winter, traversing a desolate, almost impassable region, to endeavour to quell an incipient rebellion in a territory governed for nearly two centuries by his masters, the Hudson Bay Company, in whose service he had passed his youth and manhood. When that rebellion had had its day, and events had rendered it necessary for him to continue to represent the country in the North-West, he could hardly foresee that he would

have a career independent of that body and yet continue of it. . . .

'In the short space of fifteen months the unexpected had happened. In the course of that time Mr Smith had gained the confidence of the inhabitants; he had acquired a reputation for fairness and square dealing, as well as for those qualities of heart, mind, and purpose, which denote the born leader of men, and three months after the flight of Riel it is safe to say that there was no more popular man, from Red River to the shores of the Pacific, than Donald Smith. He had, by this time, definitely decided to cast in his future lot with the North-West. He saw it already in his mind's eye a great and prosperous country, demanding those advantages, and presenting those opportunities, which mark every undeveloped country whose natural resources are not matters of conjecture, but palpable and visible to the eye.'

The name and fame of the new province of Manitoba soon spread among would-be colonists; and the desire to get there was only second in intensity to the rushes in 1849 and 1851 for the Californian gold-fields. 'Stout yeomen,' says the historian, 'pale students and professors, struggling tradesmen, wandering prodigals, shrewd speculators, heard of the new country, and, tiring of nearer and meaner hazards, started off to begin life anew in the heart of the great continent. But the magnet was not gold, but land. No one knew what the new North-West might become; all hoped that it might grant them that opportunity for which they had waited all their

lives, and which had somehow always evaded them.'

Confusion reigned at first, as might have been expected in a comparatively unknown country as large in area as the United Kingdom. But out of chaos, order soon arose, and no one was more delighted to see how rapid the change had been for good than Mr Smith, when he returned to Manitoba after his first session as Member for Selkirk in the Dominion Parliament. Whatever good result had been achieved in the new province was in a large measure due, as every thinking man in the district was aware, to the influence of Mr Donald Smith.

CHAPTER XXV

A VISIT TO LONDON

To understand fully the reason why Mr Donald Smith travelled to London to face the English shareholders of the Company on behalf of the interests of the Canadian fur-traders—the 'wintering partners' as they were termed—it will be necessary to recall the state of affairs in 1867.

In the autumn of that year Mr Smith was aware of the Dominion Government's desire to include the North-West territories in the Canadian domain. The Premier, Sir John Macdonald, had stated in a letter, 'The Hudson Bay question must soon be settled; the rapid march of events and the increase of population on this continent will compel England and Canada to come to some arrangement respecting that immense country. We shall ventilate the subject during the ensuing session of Parliament, and shall be able to understand what the feeling of Parliament is.'

Parliament proved anxious for an acquisition, but on the other hand the Company urged that in handing over to the Dominion the vast region over



London Electrotypes Agency, Ltd.

Upper Fort Garry, Red River Settlement.

which for so long they had been sole rulers, they had a right to demand substantial compensation. When the Canadian Parliament hesitated, the Premier said, 'Shall we be deterred by this bug-bear of a claim, which, if well founded, can be disposed of within moderate limits? If offered to the United States of America they would consent to pay for it an amount equal to the whole debt of Canada four times over.'

The arrangement finally arrived at, as we have already seen, was that the Hudson Bay Company should agree to surrender to the Crown all their interests in the North-West on receiving £300,000 as compensation, together with one-twentieth of fertile land and 45,000 acres in the neighbourhood of their trading posts. It was to urge upon the Company's shareholders in London the rights of the 'wintering partners' to have a share in this compensation that Mr Smith sailed to England in 1871.

Sir Stafford Northcote (afterwards Lord Iddesleigh) had succeeded Mr Goschen (the future Lord Goschen) as Governor of the Hudson Bay Company, and Mr Smith soon found that this claim of the 'wintering partners' had never been foreseen by the English shareholders, and that it was bitterly resented. Forgetting the Deed Poll of 1834, which made the Company's officers in Canada profit-sharing partners, they indignantly asked what right had these officials in the North-West to expect even serious consideration of so absurd a claim; all that they could demand with justice was a share of the yearly trading profits.

Another thing forgotten by the shareholders in

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England was that the Hudson Bay trade could be carried on quite as easily without them as with them; that, as Mr Beckles Willson puts it, 'Commerce would go on if the Company in Leadenhall Street were to retire from business to-morrow—and it would go on in the hands of the same men who control it to-day. Sir George Simpson had made it evident that the right hand of the Company—its power to barter, and, if need be, to strike—was now in Canada and not in England. But in spite of all this, the shareholders, for the most part, strongly denied the right of the 'wintering partners' to any portion of the £300,000 received from the Government of Canada in return for the cession of its chartered rights over the soil and inhabitants of the North-West territory.'

The fur traders had done well in their choice of Mr Donald Smith as representative at this conclave of the Company's shareholders in Leadenhall Street. He stood for the interests of the practical workers who, amidst the ice and snow of the Canadian wilds, were labouring to swell the dividends of the stay-at-home investors, and of whose just claim to a share of the £300,000 he was firmly convinced. To rhetoric and other graces of speech he did not aspire; but when he felt strongly on any subject he could state his case with a force and earnestness that were akin to eloquence in their effect upon an audience. He knew his subject; no man's experience on all matters relating to the Hudson Bay Company was wider or more thorough than his; his sincerity of character and earnestness of purpose, his straightforward, untiring

determination and persistent industry, his common sense and shrewd intelligence, all were known and appreciated by the Leadenhall Street shareholders of the Company, of which he was the most active and prominent figure in its realm of trade. His name commanded attention from those who had never before seen his face.

Those before whom he had to plead the cause of the Company's working officers in Canada were a formidable combination of statesmen and business men of the highest rank; but on through a succession of conclaves, in which the subject was debated keenly and often with acrimony, the representative of the Canadian traders neither wavered nor lost his temper in his advocacy of a claim of whose truth and justice he was thoroughly convinced.

Day after day he faced with unflinching courage and good humour the English shareholders, whose conduct during these proceedings has been described as not always characterised by sweetness and light.

After many days the will of some of the wiser among the shareholders began to prevail, the proceedings became less heated, and it was at last generally agreed that to deny the 'wintering partners' the share they claimed as their right out of the £300,000 would be impolitic, if not absolutely unjust.

One of the first to understand the utter folly of refusing the claim and estranging the factors and traders who were the machinery of the Hudson Bay Company's operations in the Canadian fur districts was Sir Stafford Northcote. The

shareholders supplied the money and drew their dividends; the workers out in Canada made the profits; and so extensive were the credit and influence and knowledge of these traders that it was in their power to cut themselves off from any connection with the ancient Company and take into their own hands the entire operations of the fur business. They could do without the Company; but, without them, the Company's dividends would shrink to a vanishing point.

All these facts Mr Donald Smith urged from day to day, and when Sir Stafford Northcote shrewdly understood the force of his arguments and supported them, the cause of the factors and traders was won.

A sum of £107,000 was voted to them, and a fresh agreement, called the Deed Poll of 1871, was drawn up to fix the relationship that would exist in the future between the fur dealers in Canada and the shareholders of the Company, which had descended from the status of a governing institution to the level of a private trading concern.

But what the Hudson Bay Company had lost in dignity it had gained in material and settled prosperity by the grant from the Government of an interest in one-twentieth of the land within the fertile belt. The millions of acres thus ceded to the Company in the North-West were certain to increase rapidly in value through the inducements offered to settlers by their amazing productiveness.

Affairs having now been settled, it was the work of the Company to comply with one of the

terms of the new Deed Poll by appointing a Chief Commissioner, and the choice, as was generally expected, fell upon Donald Smith. What the shareholders had heard by repute of his knowledge, firmness, and sagacity, was more than confirmed by their personal contact with him at the Company's offices in Leadenhall Street, and it was agreed that the management of affairs in Canada could not be entrusted to abler hands than his.

CHAPTER XXVI

ECHOES OF THE RIEL REBELLION

THE appointment of Donald Smith in 1871 to the office of Chief Commissioner in control of the Company's affairs in the North-West was speedily attended with good results. He had never wavered from the Imperial instincts of the thorough-going loyalist who looked upon the Hudson Bay Company as a part of the machinery of the Empire, as something higher and nobler than a mere combination of money-makers; and as Chief Commissioner he had the power and the will to work in the direction of his own Imperial aspirations. The Report issued by the Governor in 1873, less than two years after Mr Smith's victory in Leadenhall Street, shows that affairs were shaping themselves in accordance with the Chief Commissioner's most ardent desires :—

'The Committee have not failed to instruct their officers to render every assistance in their power to the Canadian Government in all measures adopted with a view to the development of the resources of the country, feeling that the interests of the Company are in this respect identical with those of the Government.'

Mr Smith was at this time, as we have seen, actively engaged in local and general legislature as a Member of the North-West Council, of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba, and as a Member of the Dominion House of Commons; and, in connection with events consequent upon and following the Riel rebellion, he was soon given ample opportunity for the exercise of his outshining gifts of moderation and sense of what was wise and practicable—a combination that marks the hall-mark of political wisdom.

On this troublesome Riel question, particularly in relation to the execution of Thomas Scott, Eastern and North-West Canada were in acute discord. While in the latter, principally Manitoba, there was a desire to forget what had happened, if not absolutely to pardon the ringleaders, rather than rouse to fresh life the passions that were dormant, there was, on the contrary, a very general opinion in Eastern Canada that the murderers should be brought to justice and made to pay the full penalty for their offence. The newspapers of Ontario pleaded in impassioned language for vengeance; orators on public platforms called for the blood of Riel and his associates, and were answered by their auditors everywhere with roars of cheering in excited assent; and even in the pulpits, where the Gospel of the 'Prince of Peace' was preached, the duty of the State to punish the murderers of Thomas Scott was vehemently urged.

The Legislature of the province of Ontario were giving effect to the unanimous public opinion of

Eastern Canada by offering a reward of 5000 dollars for information that would lead to the arrest of Riel and the rest of the ringleaders. On the other hand, Winnipeg, the life centre of the Western district, looked upon the action of Ontario as an unwarrantable intrusion, and by a majority of more than three to one passed a resolution couched in terms of strong protest.

At once Mr Smith saw the right and only way by which the conflicting opinions of the two provinces could be reconciled. Manitoba as a Canadian province had no existence at the time of Riel's rebellion; therefore, an offence committed before admittance into the Dominion came under the jurisdiction not of the Canadian Government but of the British Government in London. On these grounds Mr Smith in the Legislature proposed the following resolution, which was unanimously accepted, and duly drawn up and sent to England:—

‘That whereas during the period intervening between the passing of the Dominion Act and the temporary government of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories, when the same should be united to Canada, and the date when the union actually took place, very serious troubles occurred in the country now known as the Province of Manitoba; and whereas Her Majesty's Imperial Government is the only authority competent to deal with this grave question; and whereas, in the interests of peace and good order, it is not only desirable but requisite that steps should be taken to settle and set at rest all questions concerned with such troubles: Resolved therefore, that a

humble address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen, praying that Her Majesty would be pleased to command that this House be made acquainted with the action already taken, or which it may be Her Majesty's Royal pleasure to take, with the view of satisfying justice and the best interests of this country.'

Mr Smith was warmly welcomed by both the Government and the Opposition when, on March 29, 1871, he took his seat in the Dominion Parliament at Ottawa as member for the Selkirk division of the province of Manitoba. Some few jeeringly described him as 'Member for the Hudson Bay Company.' But the unselfish work and aims of the new member, his whole-hearted efforts for the union of the Canadian Dominion and for its prosperity, made the taunt ineffective. From the first his devotion to the general and highest interests of Canada was ungrudgingly recognised, and although the political fights he waged were many and severe, his integrity was unquestioned, and his position at length unassailable.

One troublesome incident marked his early days in the Dominion Parliament at Ottawa. A new member, Mr Delorme, of Provencher, on coming forward to take his seat was introduced by Mr Smith, the result being a 'scene in the House.' This Delorme was a Red River French-Canadian, and, as Mr Smith was well aware, one of the friends of the rebel Riel. Nothing occurred at the time, but in a few days the report spread that Delorme was not only Riel's friend but one of his active supporters in the rebellion.

A Member of the House, Mr Ross, gave notice

that he would call attention to the matter, and before a crowded and excited assembly he accused Delorme of being one of Riel's government, of having taken part in the court martial which had sentenced Thomas Scott to death, and of being, in consequence, guilty of high treason and murder.

White-faced, and speaking with great emotion, the new member indignantly denied the accusation, declaring that, although Riel's friend, he never belonged to his Council and knew nothing of the murder until days after the act. 'When Mr Smith was sent to Manitoba,' he continued, 'as Commissioner by the Canadian Government, I was a delegate to the Convention.'

There was an air of sincerity about the speaker, and a round of cheers greeted his defence; but at the mention of Mr Smith's name, interest and attention were directed to the member for Selkirk who, by implication, was under suspicion of having introduced to the Dominion Parliament one whom he knew to be guilty of high treason and murder. A writer who was present during the debate has thus described Donald Smith's appearance as he rose to face the House of Commons at Ottawa :—

'A figure over the medium height, but looking taller from the alert, well-knit character of the frame, arises, and all eyes are directed upon Donald A. Smith, the senior member of the brand-new prairie province. No one can scrutinise the massive head and face which crowns the figure, with its high forehead, strong nose, long upper lip, and pent-house brows which jut out to twice the

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ordinary dimensions, without making up his mind that the member for Selkirk is a man out of the common. His report on the Riel disturbances led us to expect something from the chief officer of the Hudson Bay Company in this session. But whether he speaks or not, it is an open secret that the Government relies chiefly upon his knowledge to bring order out of chaos in the new territories.'

CHAPTER XXVII

SCENES IN PARLIAMENT

THAT Donald Smith would take part in the discussion was expected, and his utterance on a matter that was at once of keen local interest and of imperial importance was awaited with intense eagerness. True to his nature he wasted no time in leading up to his subject, but went to the heart of it with that straightforward directness of purpose that ever characterised the man.

'It would be in the recollection of most of the members of this House,' he said 'that a certain party in Red River got up a Council last winter, which was called the "Provisional Government." It was composed of Mr Riel and several French members. With that Council, he was convinced the honourable member in question (Mr Delorme) had nothing to do.' After referring to his own mission on the North-West question, he continued : 'I agreed to the public meeting which was held on January 18th and 19th, when members were freely elected to the Convention by both sides. The Convention met in February, and was occupied in discussing the so-called Bill of Rights. The discussion was as free and unrestrained as any

discussion in the House up to a certain point. The honourable member for Provencher (Mr Delorme) was a member of the Convention, and then, and not till then, had the honourable gentleman anything to do with the disturbance or insurrection at Red River. I never heard anything mooted against Mr Delorme until the other day, and certainly had I believed there was any foundation for such a charge, I would not only have hesitated, but actually refused, to have been in anywise instrumental in introducing the honourable member before this House as I have done. I would have regarded it as unbecoming my position as a member of this House, and still more as an insult to my honour, if I had thought that the honourable member had been in any way connected with the so-called court-martial. As to who constituted that court-martial I do not know, but that Mr Delorme was one of those people who arrogated to themselves the power to sit in judgment upon a British subject and condemn him to death, I entirely deny. (Cheers.)

‘There was a further Convention and delegation, which was sometimes called the House of Assembly of Red River. To that also, I believe, the honourable gentleman had been elected, but elected by his parish. I took some little part in bringing that Assembly together. A great deal has been said about that—a great deal erroneously. What was done at that time was this :—There was at that time a gentleman from Canada condemned to death. Intercession had been made for him by several parties, but without avail. At a late hour in the evening I visited those who were then in power,

and it was given me to understand that they were absolutely in favour of the union with Canada, and merely desired to have the people of Red River come to an understanding exactly on what terms and conditions they were to enter the Confederation. I assented, so far as my assent was necessary, on behalf of Canada, to this Council being called, and further said I would go amongst the people and induce them to take part in this Council or Convention, but absolutely and only with the view of making arrangements for a union with Canada. Of that Convention the honourable member for Provencher was also a member. I believe that having said this I have said all that is necessary on the subject.

‘There was in the first instance a Council called the “Provisional Government”—the member for Provencher had nothing to do with that. In the Convention of which the honourable gentleman was subsequently a member there were several who took part in it, not simply because they happened to be present, but they actually took a more active part in bringing matters forward than the French-speaking members, and there can be no imputation against their loyalty. (Cheers.) Further, I might say that I fully believe there are none who deplore the sad events of last winter more than the people of Red River, not only the English, but the French-speaking people of Red River.’

Almost before the cheers that rewarded Mr Smith’s plain and direct speech had subsided, Mr Ross, who had brought before the House the question of Mr Delorme’s introduction, again

rose. 'The member for Selkirk (Mr Smith) had,' he said, 'distinctly stated that he did not know who composed the court-martial.'

Mr McDougall, who, it will be remembered, had been refused entrance into the Red River Settlement (known now as Manitoba) after being appointed its Governor, then intervened in the debate. With a keen remembrance of the scant courtesy extended to him at Red River, and with natural irritation over his own failure, he moved that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the charges made against both Mr Smith and Mr Delorme. Speaking excitedly, he said, 'This House must be relieved of the disgrace and dishonour of receiving among its members any one guilty of treason or complicity with it. If it is true that the honourable member for Provencher (Mr Delorme) had never been connected with Riel's Council, it should be proved and made plain in the most public manner. A mere statement on the matter was not sufficient. As for the honourable member for Selkirk, when his speech is published he will see that his statements are not quite in conformity with some of the facts which have been made public respecting the North-West difficulty.'

Mr Smith in his reply made humorous comment on ex-Governor McDougall's interest in the North-West which had refused to accept him, and, as to his own statements, quietly said he was prepared to prove the truth of them all.

But Mr McDougall had another and a seemingly triumphant card to play. Producing a photograph and brandishing it as he would a weapon,

he went on : 'I have no desire to find the honourable member (Mr Delorme) guilty, but this photograph of Riel's Privy Council, in which appears the figure of the honourable member for Provencher, is clear enough proof that the charge I bring against him is a just one.'

By this time the House was profoundly stirred and amidst the excitement Mr Delorme rose to claim a further hearing. 'I chanced to be present with a number of Indians,' he explained, 'when the photograph referred to was taken. There were several there who had no connection with the Council, and I happened to be among them. I never was a member of Riel's Council.'

By this time the photograph had been handed from member to member, and it was at once seen that among those pictured in it, in addition to Mr Delorme, there were several who were free from any suspicion of having had official connection with the rebels. After further discussion of a heated character, Mr McDougall's motion for a Select Committee was put to the vote and defeated by a substantial majority, Delorme taking the earliest opportunity of thanking Mr Smith for the steadfastness with which he had supported him in the hour of need.

Through the force of his character and his practical intimacy with the affairs of the new province of Manitoba, Donald Smith quickly became a prominent personage in the Dominion Parliament at Ottawa; and in the course of the debates it was many times stated that in all matters concerning the North-West he had better and more thorough knowledge than the Government. The Premier,

Sir John Macdonald, had not yet found time to acquire anything approaching thorough information concerning the conditions of life and the needs of the people in the prairie province so recently added to the Dominion of Canada. Even in its infancy as a part of the Dominion, Manitoba's fame had gone forth as a region rich in possibilities for both settlers and capitalists; it was an acquisition to the Empire calling for prompt and wise and thorough management; and in their efforts towards this the Canadian Government showed an appreciation of their responsibilities by seeking the advice from time to time of the member for the Selkirk division of Manitoba.

But while efforts were being unceasingly directed towards development on right lines of the great North-West, there were irresponsible members who would not allow the old sores to rest and be healed, and in this same session of 1871 the matter of Thomas Scott's murder was revived by a motion calling for the seeking out and punishment of Riel and his associates. The Government stated, as Mr Smith had already done, that the North-West was not a Canadian province at the time of Riel's rebellion, and that, therefore, in this matter they had no jurisdiction. They explicitly denied any knowledge of Riel's movements, or whether he was still in Canada.

Unable to move the Government, the complaining members turned their attention to Mr Smith, declaring that he, in common with the rest of the Hudson Bay Company in Canada, had formed a conspiracy to prevent the murderers of Scott from

being brought to punishment. Then uprose Mr Smith and said :—

‘Sir, I was present at Fort Garry when Thomas Scott was murdered. I did all in my power to save the life of that poor man. When I was vested with the Chief Civil Authority after Riel’s departure, a number of excited people—some forty or fifty of them—came to me, asking to be sworn in as special constables to arrest the murderers. They said, “We will go to shoot them down, but not to take them in any other way.” In fact, they demanded a warrant to commit murder. I refused to give them such a warrant. They afterwards, it is true, obtained one; but by that time the murderers had escaped.’

In reply to a further complaint that official appointments in Winnipeg had been given to two men notorious for their connection with Riel, Mr Smith vehemently denied the implication of either one or the other in any criminal act committed by the rebel leader, and in thus defending them he stirred the wrath of Dr Schultz, henceforth one of his most doughty and impetuous opponents in Parliament.

‘I hold in my hand,’ said Dr Schultz, ‘an affidavit from one Thomas Lusted, reciting the facts concerning the refusal of the warrant, and affirming his belief that Donald Smith was anxious to give Riel time to escape.’

To this Mr Smith replied that on the very evening of the same day Lusted admitted that under the circumstances the refusal to issue the warrant was a rightful act. One member declared that Mr Smith’s statement had made the case for Riel’s

arrest stronger than ever. Although the motion was eventually lost, the belief grew stronger that the Hudson Bay Company, if not directly implicated in the Red River rebellion, had been in secret sympathetic with it. Years were to pass before the Company and its officials were to be regarded as having clean hands in the matter.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SCENES IN PARLIAMENT—*continued*

THAT the Hudson Bay Company, if not abettors in Riel's rebellion, were in sympathy with it, was the fixed belief of many in the Dominion; and among those who were honestly of opinion that Mr Smith was a supporter of traitors was Dr Schultz. The latter was of German birth, but a Canadian in his training and his aspirations. He was a man of ability and high character, eager and impetuous, and in all that concerned the honour and prosperity of Canada spoke his mind with a directness of speech and purpose that seldom failed to impress if not to convince. In him Mr Smith recognised an opponent worthy of attention, and the Parliamentary duels between the two were watched with very keen attention.

A day or two after the proceedings in the Dominion Parliament narrated in our last chapter, Dr Schultz made a vigorous attack on the Company in a speech on the question of the payment of an indemnity for losses sustained in consequence of the rebellion; and it was evident that the members generally were in no humour to consider the matter seriously. As one member put it, he

'looked upon any claims by the Hudson Bay Company as a mere piece of impudence, inasmuch as they had, in his opinion, been instrumental in causing the rebellion.' Recognising the futility of persisting at this time, Mr Smith contented himself by asking that a full investigation should be made into all the circumstances connected with the rebellion in the North-West. 'Such an investigation,' he pleaded, 'was due to the people of the North-West and the officers of the Hudson Bay Company who had been so greatly maligned in connection with this affair.'

In spite of the fact that he thus openly courted a full official inquiry, he still had to bear the brunt of taunts and calumnies; and whenever he ventured a word in his own defence, what he said was brushed aside as an attempt to shield the doings of the Company. As an instance of this, ex-Governor McDougall's interruption might be quoted when Mr Smith rose to reply to one of the many attacks made upon him by Dr Schultz:—'I object to this irregular proceeding. The people of this country will soon come to regard the honourable member for Selkirk as the representative of the Hudson Bay Company sent to this House to rehabilitate them before the Dominion.'

During the following session (1872) Mr Smith diligently strove for the improvement of trade facilities in Manitoba. While always friendly in his dealings with the United States, he thought and spoke strongly concerning their possession of certain privileges which were not in the best interests of the Dominion. Particularly vehement was his objection to the legal rights held by

America of trading in spirituous liquors with the Indians in the North-West. Protesting against this practice, as opposed to both moral law and order, he said :—

‘Although the laws of America provide against such introduction into her own territory, yet it is well known that the people of the States are able to trade largely with the Indians in arms and liquors. The Company had entirely prohibited such trading. This had operated most beneficially, and British subjects never traded with the Indians in such things; but the Americans did so to a large extent, and the evil may prove very great if something is not done to put a stop to this very unsatisfactory state of things.’

The Government recognised the importance of the subject and definitely stated that the matter would receive their immediate and sympathetic attention, which it did.

At the general election in 1873 Mr Smith was again a candidate for the representation of the Selkirk division of Winnipeg and St John in the Canadian Parliament; and although he won by a big majority, it was only after a contest in which, on his opponent’s side, were displayed some vivid examples of the election methods common in England before the time of the Ballot Act. At one of the meetings that helped to enliven the struggle for the constituency a speaker is reported to have made the following play upon the name Smith :—

‘Smith! Why fellow-citizens, who is Smith? What is Smith? Is the palladium of our destinies to be entrusted to a Smith? What has a Smith

done that he should seek to grasp the Ark of the Covenant with the one hand and with the other wrestle for the sceptre of the Almighty? Smith! Why Smith is not a name, but an occupation.' Thereupon a Smithite promptly made reply :—

'Attempts are being made to ridicule you for standing by the ablest man in the settlement. You are taunted for supporting a Smith. Gentlemen, let me tell you, you cannot go far wrong if you always vote for Smith, wherever you are, whatever you are, or for whatever office he is running. If you want bravery, vote for the eminent Captain John Smith; if you want the inventor of the most stupendous system of political economy, vote for Adam Smith; if you want higher wit than was ever vouchsafed to man, give your vote to Sydney Smith; and if you want Scotch ability united to Canadian patriotism, then vote for Donald A. Smith.'

The defeat sustained by the Macdonald Ministry in 1873 was the result of a charge brought against the Government of employing for electioneering purposes certain payments made to them by the promoters of the Canadian Pacific Railway; and around Mr Smith, as on a pivot, revolved all the existing incidents of the crisis. On his vote and on the influence attending it, seemed to hang the fate of the Government. Let Mr Smith's own words explain the reason for his action in supporting the Opposition :—'I could not conscientiously support the Government, but I offered and proposed another amendment to the effect that the Government should frankly confess their fault to the

House, and then, if the country condoned it, it would be a very different thing.'

In letters and in private interviews Sir John Macdonald used all the influence and all the arguments he could bring to bear in trying to induce his old supporter to change his mind; but in vain. Mr Smith's defection would turn the scale against the Government, and upon him was hurled the most violent abuse that the most rancorous minds could frame. He was even charged by some with selling himself to the highest bidder, and by others with acting from motives of revenge over political favours denied to him. But in the midst of the storm's wildest intensity he remained, as was his wont, calm and seemingly indifferent.

Mr Mackenzie, leader of the Opposition, had proposed the vote of censure against the Government, and the time was drawing near for the division. An eye-witness has described the scene:—'In a telling and dramatic speech, Sir John Macdonald, the Premier, threw himself upon the mercy of the House and the country. It became evident, as the debate proceeded, that one or two votes would decide the fate of the Government.

'At one o'clock in the morning of November 5, 1873, Mr Smith got upon his feet. His utterance was to be oracular, for he and the people he represented were most vitally concerned in the building of the railway that had caused this Parliamentary turmoil. It has been his custom never to allow any one to know what he is going to do until he has done it. When that has transpired it seems tremendously worth while—the only right

thing to have done. This scene was to be a case in point. The House that had been before in a whirlpool of excited noise fell into a dead calm. Even until his closing words it was not evident whether he would adhere to his party or desert it.'

Then in his concluding sentence, spoken with profound feeling before the crowded and excited assembly, he declared his intention to cast his vote against the Government he had for so long supported. 'For the honour of the country,' he said, bringing his momentous speech to an end, 'no Government should exist that has a shadow of suspicion resting upon it, and for that reason I cannot give it my support.'

The eye-witness, whose description of what took place we have already quoted, thus pictures the scene that followed Mr Smith's emphatic statement that he had cast his lot with the Opposition against the Ministry:—'The House broke up in disorder. In the corridors the members rushed together, cheering and hand-shaking, or reviling and threatening. Suddenly there was a storm centre round Mr Smith, upon whom Sir John Macdonald was bearing down. He was held back, gesticulating wildly. What he said never got into the books.'

CHAPTER XXIX

CRITICS IN PARLIAMENT

FOR many Parliamentary sessions the member for Selkirk was the object of fierce and bitter attacks that would have shaken one less strong and constant or less conscious than himself of personal integrity. Sir John Macdonald was slow in forgetting that to Mr Smith's vote and influence he owed his political overthrow; and Schultz continued to regard him as the member for the Hudson Bay Company, the shaper of its destinies, and directly responsible for any shortcomings that alert suspicion could bring forward to its discredit. As an instance of this perpetual suspicion, Mr Beckles Willson states the case of the North-West telegraphs.

'Part of the bargain made by Canada with the Hudson Bay Company in 1896 was that the wire required for the new system should be purchased by the Canadian Government at cost price. When the invoices were duly presented to the Public Accounts Committee the price seemed to them enormous, being something like two or three times the cost of the ordinary wire. Naturally rumour ran that the Company had been discovered in a fraud.

A public discussion took place, but there was no use attempting to stem the tide of public opinion without proofs; so Mr Smith was fain to wait until an explanation, with the original invoices showing the price paid by the Company for the wire, were forthcoming from England. The charge was baseless; the Government had only paid for a very special kind of wire the actual price paid for it by the Company. But the wire had been bought in 1864, and the market price had sunk from £50 to £32 per ton. The Company had paid the higher price. In making an *amende honorable* to the House, Mr Mackenzie said the suspicions of the Committee had been raised, but the matter was now satisfactorily explained. 'No one really supposed that the Hudson Bay Company desired to cheat the Government,' he added; 'but it was thought that a mistake had been made.' Mr Smith explained that the homogeneous wire was selected by the Company for its lightness. The weight, which in iron wire would extend for one hundred miles, would in this wire be sufficient for three hundred.'

During the session of 1875 a vigorous attempt was made to show that the North-West Indians were in a state of serious unrest in consequence of the Company's hard dealing. Even when a commission had been appointed to consider the subject, Dr Schultz was not satisfied, he professed to fear that the commission were little better than puppets under the control of the Hudson Bay Company. Feeling ran so high that the dangerous step was taken of circulating among the Indians, in their own language, one of the most inflammatory

of Schultz's speeches. The unwisdom of this was generally admitted, and Mr Schultz took an early opportunity of denying that the folly had been committed with his knowledge. Public opinion, however, was quick in recognising that the contentment and good order prevailing among the Indians were clear proof that the Company's affairs in the territories of the aborigines were being justly and tactfully administered.

Reference has already been made to money advanced by Mr Smith, with the knowledge and sanction of Governor Archibald and Archbishop Taché, to induce the rebel Riel to leave the country where his presence was always like a spark in the neighbourhood of gunpowder. When it was proposed in Parliament that the amount should be repaid to Mr Smith out of the public funds, Schultz was vigorous in his opposition, although it was generally agreed that the £600 advanced ought to be regarded as the nation's debt and not be borne by an individual. The transaction had taken place three years previously, and Mr Smith had never claimed repayment. 'I don't care,' he once said, 'whether the Government reimburses me or not. I did what I did to avert further trouble and bloodshed, and because if I hadn't advanced the money no one else would or could.'

The opportunity for an onslaught was not to be neglected by Schultz and his supporters. Not for them was it to recognise that Mr Smith had acted as a patriot in the cause of peace and order, and that what he had done for the prevention of further bloodshed was by the expressed wish of the

highest civil and religious authorities in the disturbed district. They even went so far as to declare that the payment of the money to Riel was a proof of Mr Smith's complicity with the insurrection; and, further, they carried their acrimony to such an extreme as to say that Mr Smith had let the matter drop for three years in order to receive the benefit of accumulated interest.

The accused showed no heat in replying to these and similar defamations. He was content to state his own case by quietly reading an extract from Archbishop Taché's own evidence given before the North-West Committee appointed to inquire into the whole subject of the rebellion :—

'It was then that I saw Lieutenant-Governor Archibald on the subject of money. There were many conversations between the Governor and myself on the subject. He called in Mr Smith, and in my presence asked if he could furnish the funds, which, of course, he said would be reimbursed by the Canadian Government. I named at first £800 sterling to the Governor as the sum required by Riel and Lepine (another ringleader) for themselves and their families. The Governor asked Mr Smith to lend £800 sterling. I mentioned that I had 1000 dollars at my disposal, without mentioning the source, and thus the sum to be furnished by Mr Smith was reduced to £600 sterling.'

The justice of making reimbursement was generally acknowledged both by the Government and the Opposition, and the Premier (Mr Mac-Kenzie) emphatically stated that though there was

no legal obligation on the part of the country to pay, the affair was a debt of honour, calling for instant settlement; while the opinion of Sir John Macdonald, the late Premier was, 'Of course, the Lieutenant-Governor had no authority and no instruction to make any payment, because the point arose so suddenly that he could not have any communication with the Government; but that if Mr Archibald, as the representative of Canada in the North-West, took the responsibility of making a promise of payment on the faith of its repayment by the Dominion Government, Parliament would not allow the Hudson Bay Company or Mr Smith to lose the money.'

This point of view received the assent of such men as Mr (afterwards Sir Charles) Tupper and Mr Edward Blake. 'Such a pledge,' said the latter, 'must be repeated by the House and the money voted. The late Premier would have been unworthy of his position if he had failed to respect that pledge, and the House would be equally unworthy if it refused to pay the money.'

The vote was passed almost unanimously, and on receiving the money Mr Smith immediately gave it away as a donation to a public charity.

Dr Schultz and his supporters were not disheartened by this reverse; on the contrary, with increased energy they continued to throw mud at the Hudson Bay Company and its 'member' in the hope that some of it would stick. They shrieked for a public inquiry into what they alleged to be the traitorous connection between the Company and the rebels, in spite of the fact, pointed out by Mr Bowell, Prime Minister in after

years, that Mr Smith had himself asked for, and in vain, an official investigation of the Hudson Bay Company relation with the troubles in the North-West.

Among other things alleged against the member for Selkirk was that, when acting as Commissioner at Fort Garry, he had conspired both against the Canadian and the Imperial Government, and in proof of the assertion they published some statements made by the rebel O'Donoghue. To these accusations Mr Smith made reply :—'It is said by Mr O'Donoghue that I recognised the 'Provisional Government' then in the country as the lawful government of the country. Such is not the case. It is true that on several, indeed on many, occasions while there, I met Riel and others; but those meetings were in pursuance of the duty I had undertaken as Commissioner for Canada. They were held solely and entirely with the view of inducing those people—the people of Red River—to come into confederation, and certainly not with the intention of advising them to remain, as they had been for some time, at enmity with the Dominion.'

Although these words were sufficiently plain and straightforward the libels were continued, and against the Premier's advice, who urged that the scurrilous charges should be treated with silent contempt, Mr Smith rose in the House of Commons, April 2, 1875, to reply to the enemies who sought his political and social destruction.

'It is false,' he said 'that I advised the people to submit to the "Provisional Government." In connection with this point raised by the honourable

member (Dr Schultz) I may say that the reverend gentleman, Archdeacon M'Lean, now Bishop of Saskatchewan, who accompanied me at the trial of Lepine, which took place last autumn at Fort Garry, took occasion specially to point this out. He stated that on every occasion when speaking to the people throughout the settlement I impressed upon them that they were not under any circumstances to address Riel, but to address in the shortest possible manner the notice of their choice of a delegate to Mr Bunn, who really had been chosen by the Convention as the Secretary. Mr Bunn himself gave evidence to this effect before the North-West Committee.

'More than that, on one occasion a petition was shown to me, which it was proposed to present to the so-called President of the Government of Rupert's Land. I told the person in whose possession it was that it should not be presented, and therefore it was torn up. At the same time it must be remembered that while in Fort Garry I was virtually a prisoner and under strict guard, and during a certain length of time I was not allowed to speak to any individual other than the guards. It was hardly likely that I, a prisoner, could be taking part with those persons who kept me prisoner and who were in insurrection.'

In concluding his speech, which was listened to attentively by an excited House, Mr Smith said —
• 'I have to express my great regret at having been under the necessity of bringing up these matters before the House; but I felt that these accusations against the Hudson Bay Company were not made because those who brought them forward believed



Photo: Underwood & Underwood, London.

Summer Tents of Eskimos, North Greenland.

them, but for the purpose of making this country believe what they themselves did not credit.'

'I do not see,' said Dr Schultz, rising immediately in reply, 'that the hon. member has shown us anything outside his own statement to controvert the charges brought against him. On the one hand, we have the word of Mr O'Donoghue; on the other, the word of the hon. member. I am not going to express an opinion as to which of these gentlemen is correct.'

Schultz was an able, well-meaning man, but in the heat of argument over matters that were to him of vital interest he was time after time carried into excesses that he lived to regret. During the whole of his political career he never went to a greater excess than in placing the word of a discredited political adventurer of O'Donoghue's stamp as a balance against that of a man of Mr Smith's standing and integrity.

But in spite of having gone to this extreme he was not content. Alluding to Mr Smith's mission as Commissioner at the time of the rebellion he declared that courage and competency were required for the task, and that in both of these qualities Mr Smith had been found wanting. 'I charge him,' he explicitly said, 'with cowardice and incompetency.'

The discussion being irregular was stopped by the Speaker's ruling, but it was the general opinion of the House that Mr Smith should have an opportunity of replying to so gross an attack, and on the following day the parliamentary duel was renewed.

'I hope,' said Mr Smith, 'that as the hon. member for Lisgar (Dr Schultz) is really aware of the facts of the case he will consider it his duty to withdraw the expressions he used last night. He well remembers that a few months after the disturbances in the North-West he came to me and expressed his earnest desire that I should be returned as member for the county I now represent.'

Schultz having interrupted with a direct denial, Mr Smith continued :—'Yes, the hon. member has been always ready to deny this—for certain considerations. He was quite ready as he has expressed it, to bury the hatchet as between the Hudson Bay Company and himself, and that he and I for the future should go hand in hand. Now, sir, if the hon. member believed—sincerely believed—that I was a coward and incompetent, a poltroon, a recreant to my Queen and country, would he wish to have it supposed that he, a loyal and honest man, came forward and desired, not to oppose, but to assist me at my election? The assertions he has made concerning me in this House he would never venture even to whisper in the North-West, for he knows well that no one would credit them there. It is, I believe, generally held among people by whom the hon. member is best known that he is capable of making almost any assertion.'

The liveliness and pugnacity of this retort aroused and interested a crowded House, and, inspired by encouraging cheers from the majority, who were assured of his integrity, he maintained the attack with increasing energy.

'When I went to the North-West as Commissioner for Canada, I did not go there for payment. To the credit of the late Government (Sir John Macdonald's ministry) let it be said that they would have paid me liberally, but I said I would not accept, and I did not accept, a single dollar of the public money for my own use. But the insurrection in the North-West which left me poorer, has been a godsend to the hon. member. When the trouble began he was a poor man, when the trouble ended he was a rich man comparatively—at the expense of his country.'

The usual scene followed, and in response to the appeal of Schultz's friends, Mr Smith was called upon by the Speaker to modify the offending expression. Like the astute parliamentary tactician he was, he promptly withdrew the expression and substituted a justification.

'I do not,' he went on, 'question the propriety of the decision given by the Commission on Indemnities in respect of the claim of the hon. member, but if there is one thing more than another that has given dissatisfaction throughout the North-West, it is the large amount awarded to him, while other persons who had suffered severely had received a pittance.'

Schultz replied, but the unexpected turn in the attack had shaken his composure; even in the opinion of his friends he was ineffective, and the laurels went to his opponent.

Sir John Macdonald once said, 'Smith is a far better speaker than I had given him credit for. He has coolness and resource and plausibility, and just that amount of venom when he is attacked

which a good statesman ought to have.' It is generally believed that the matter and manner of Mr Smith's reply to Dr Schultz first made Canada's most eminent statesman aware of Donald Smith's all round capacity.

The repulse inflicted by Mr Smith's vigorous reply to an unfair and an uncalled for attack in no degree lessened Schultz's ardour in baiting the member for Selkirk; and the tussles between the two were the delight both of legislators and frequenters of the galleries. On one occasion, goaded beyond bearing by the taunting and clever invective of his energetic opponent, Mr Smith made a reply that would have for ever silenced one less determined than Schultz.

'The hon. member has spoken of cowardice and incapacity in connection with the affair of Riel's rebellion; but such an imputation would come home with more truth and justice against himself. When entrenched within his stronghold at the outset of the insurrection, why did he not keep his post with the body of men with whom he was then associated? Were the odds too great against him? If so, why so unmanly as to turn round and upbraid those who were in a weaker and far more difficult position than he himself when he surrendered his arms and was marched off to prison? . . . One word more. Before the real circumstances were known regarding the hon. member's conduct at Red River, the hon. member had been lionised in Canada, whither he had retired. He had been the recipient of valuable gifts of watches, of services of plate, with guns with which to shoot the members of the 'Provisional Government,' and

all sorts of nice things. This was very pleasant, no doubt, at the moment, but, sir, I hazard the suspicion that the hon. gentleman, since it is known how little he deserved them, looks back upon these occurrences, these infelicitous trophies, with very little satisfaction. . . . The hon. member told the House on a former occasion that he had, in respect of the suspiciously large indemnity he had received, been whitewashed by a Committee of Public Accounts; but every member who has served on that Committee knew that through that layer of whitewash there appeared many dark streaks.'

All through these heated discussions Schultz was acute enough to know that Mr Smith in self-defence only, and with no natural acrimony, had taken up the cudgels of these uncongenial recriminations; but clever, and gifted with a keen sense of humour, he chose to assume that the whole subject was, with Mr Smith, an unconquerable passion on which he was bound to say something on every possible occasion.

During the Amnesty Debate in 1876, Schultz deliberately charged Mr Smith with having secretly attended a meeting in the company of Riel and his supporters. A few days elapsed before the accused could obtain the necessary material for a convincing denial, but before the debate ended Mr Smith was able to produce before the House legally-sworn affidavits of leading citizens in the North-West to the effect that he had never been present at any such meeting.

In this move, Dr Schultz was completely beaten, but, bringing his powers of humour into play, he

turned his own discomfiture into such pungent and picturesque ridicule of his opponent that the house was shaken with merriment.

'Sir,' said Schultz solemnly, 'members of this House will remember Coleridge's beautiful tale of the Ancient Mariner. This Ancient Mariner is described as a man of weird and uncouthly aspect, over whose soul the shadow of some great crime rested, and who, at stated intervals, was compelled by some hidden remorse within to pour out his doleful tale and relieve his misery.

'Sir, it almost seems to me a parallel case with my friend from Selkirk, who in and out of session seems to be ever boiling and simmering with his oft-told tale of North-West troubles. I feel, sir, much as the wedding guest whom the Ancient Mariner stopped, who exclaimed,—

'I fear thee, Ancient Mariner,
I fear thy skunny hand !
By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me ?''

This ingeniously applied misquotation of Coleridge's lines created just the diversion Mr Schultz desired, and the laugh was on his side until, with a quick appreciation of the humour of the situation, Mr Smith returned the literary compliment by likening his opponent to another striking character in fiction, the unveracious and cowardly, yet withal richly humorous, Sir John Falstaff.

Of Dr Schultz it can be said, in extenuation of the long continued and always easily disproved insinuations against the personal character of

the member for Selkirk, that he was sincere in believing that the Red River rebellion was knowingly brought about by the Hudson Bay Company in furtherance of its own interests; and Mr Smith was to him the convenient 'outward and visible' mark by which the Company could be attacked. He lived to see and gallantly to acknowledge the baselessness of his doubts concerning Mr Smith's public and private integrity, although he never wavered in his hostility to the policy of the Company. Eventually he received the honour of knighthood, and was appointed Governor of Manitoba. 'Towards the close of his life,' to quote Mr Beckles Willson's tribute to his memory, 'when, his rugged constitution shattered, his character lost its asperity, and there were few men more universally regretted, even by the objects of his old-time malignity, when his untimely death occurred in Mexico in 1896.'

CHAPTER XXX

FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

ON January 6, 1897, at St George's Club, London, Sir Charles Tupper made public recognition of the services rendered towards the unification of Canada by Donald A. Smith, his official successor as High Commissioner for the Dominion, on whom a knighthood of the Order of St Michael and St George had been conferred in the year following the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

'The Canadian Pacific Railway would have no existence to-day,' said Sir Charles, 'notwithstanding all that the Government did to support that undertaking, had it not been for the indomitable pluck and energy and determination, both financially and in every other respect, of Sir Donald Smith.'

Let us briefly consider the origin of that gigantic railway scheme, the difficulties that hampered the endeavours of the pioneers, and the mightiness of the results which, by the magic power of those thousands of miles of shining metal, linked a number of disunited British provinces into one

vast Dominion, welded together under the same Imperial Government, a Union of Canada from ocean to ocean.

It was difficult to imagine that there could be any real bond of union between the states of a country like Canada, with a population less than that of London and an extent, from Atlantic to Pacific, more than nine times the whole length of England. But with the making of the Canadian Pacific Railway, one of the noblest of the world's railway systems, this union was achieved.

British Columbia, on the Pacific side of North America, a country among the richest in the world for minerals and timber, its rivers teeming with salmon and trout and with sturgeon approaching to the fabulous in size, was not in the early history of Canada a part of the Dominion. In 1871, the people of Columbia were invited to join the then recently federated Canadian States; but they answered :—‘There would be no advantage to us in our becoming part of your Union. Between you on the Atlantic side and ourselves on the Pacific side there stretch hundreds of miles of prairie land almost uninhabited; we are separated from you by great chains of mountains; and between us wide rivers roll. Make a railway across the continent by which we can easily travel to trade with you and you with us. Then we shall feel that we are actually a part of Canada and will gladly join the union.’

This proposal for an iron track nearly three thousand miles long from the Pacific to Montreal caused worry to the Canadians. They thought of the rocky barriers on the north side of Lake

Superior; of the nine hundred miles of prairies gradually rising westwards, of the vast ranges of the Rocky Mountains standing like a stupendous wall in the way, huge masses that were as little known then as the ranges of Central Africa are to-day; they wondered how supplies and labour could be found among so scanty a population; and they doubted whether such a vast work could be steadily continued amid the storms and drifting snow of Canadian winters.

When British Columbia, in 1871, finally decided to become a part of the Dominion, it was only on the understanding, expressly set forth, that the Canadian Government should guarantee 'the commencement of the construction of a railway to connect the seaboard of British Columbia with the railway system of Canada; and further, to secure the completion of such railway within ten years from the date of union.'

But when Mr Mackenzie succeeded Sir John Macdonald as Premier, the hopes of those who desired the railway, believing that Canada's destiny depended on the making of a national highway, seemed further off than ever from realisation. In one of his first speeches after taking office, Mr Mackenzie said :—'One of the matters which will be brought up will be the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. You are aware that during the discussion on the Bill I objected to the provision to complete the railway within ten years. Nearly three years of that time have elapsed, and we are bound by this contract to finish it within seven years and three months. I have always thought that a speedy means of

communication across the continent was necessary for the good of the settlement and for the purpose of opening up the districts where we have great riches undeveloped in the bosom of the earth.'

Then Mr Mackenzie went on to propose that instead of building a trans-continental railway, the rivers and lakes might be utilised for communication. In short, the burden of his argument was that Canada was not sufficiently wealthy to carry out so mighty a project; and that all purposes would be served by a joint water and railway scheme for linking the Atlantic with the Pacific.

Manitoba was impatient at the delay in giving means of quick access to the coast for the rich harvests of her fertile plains; British Columbia was indignant, and threatened secession from the union unless the agreement was carried out; and a chorus of protest went up from the trading public. Mr Beckles Willson quotes the wrathful expressions of an individual who, aggrieved by the troubles and delays of the water route, stormily interviewed Mr Smith on the matter :—

'Look at me! Ain't I a healthy sight? I've come by the Government water route from Thunder Bay, and it's taken me twenty-five days to do it. During that time I've been half-starved on victuals I wouldn't give a swampy Indian. The water used to pour into my bunk of nights, and the boat was so leaky that every bit of luggage I've got is water-logged and ruined. But that ain't all. I've broke my arm and sprained my ankle helping to carry half a dozen trunks over a dozen portages, and when I refused to take a paddle in

one of the boats, an Ottawa Irishman told me to go to blazes, and said if I gave him any more of my cursed chat he'd make me get off and walk to Winnipeg. Mr Smith, when you go to Ottawa next time you can tell old Mackenzie that there's one man here in Manitoba who don't hold much by his water route, and who wants that there Pacific Railway, and wants it badly; otherwise, you don't get my vote next election, that's all.'

In October, 1878, a General Election took place, and when the Liberal Party, led by Mr Mackenzie, were defeated at the polls owing to public dissatisfaction with their commercial policy, in a large measure due to their lack of action in the matter of the railway, Sir John Macdonald again assumed the reins of office. Utterly dissatisfied with Mr Mackenzie's half-hearted support of the railway scheme, and recognising that Sir John Macdonald was in line with him on that matter, Mr Smith returned to his old allegiance, and took his place in the House on May 10, 1879, as a supporter of the new ministry.

It had been at first his strong desire that the proposed railway across the continent should be undertaken and carried to completion by the Government; but the time had now come when he recognised that only by private capitalists and the enthusiasm of individual energy could the work be done. The financial risk was so tremendous that when Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper went to London in 1879 to seek the aid of capitalists in completing the enterprise they were laughed at as 'dreamers of dreams.'

'A railway across the North American continent!' exclaimed one of the most celebrated financiers of the time; 'these Canadians are rushing headlong into bankruptcy.'

But less than a year later a syndicate was formed to carry through the whole undertaking, and although nothing transpired at the time concerning its composition it was generally understood that the prime movers and leading spirits were Mr Donald Smith and Mr George Stephen (afterwards Lord Mount Stephen). Mr Stephen was related to Mr Smith, being the son of his aunt, Miss Elspeth Smith, who became the wife of William Stephen, of Dufftown. On leaving Scotland for London in his youth he found employment with Messrs Pawson, linen-drappers, St Paul's Churchyard, and on emigrating to Canada was received into partnership by a firm of drapers in Montreal. Having a capacity for finance, and encouraged by the advice of his cousin, Mr Smith, he quickly won success and became a recognised authority on Canadian financial matters.

Both Mr Smith and Mr Stephen risked their all—their capital and their public credit—on the adventure of the Canadian Pacific Railway; and although in after time, when splendid success rewarded their efforts, rumour naturally spoke of their profits over the railway, the exact opposite was the case. Speaking on the subject to Mr Beckles Willson, Mr Smith once said:—'I have heard that people talk of the profit I have gained out of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Let me tell you I would have been hundreds of thousands

of pounds in pocket if I had never had anything to do with that enterprise.'

Many years later when, as Lord Strathcona, he recalled the immense difficulties of the undertaking, he said :—'We had, of course, a good deal of anxiety while the work was going on, but we were sustained by the knowledge that it was approved of and supported by Canada as a whole, and that an important step was being taken, not only in developing the resources of the country, but also in bringing Canada closer to England and to our sister colonies, thus forming a means of cementing together the various parts of the Empire.'

It is through this understanding of the true spirit of Empire, its hopes, its aims, its possibilities, that the name of Lord Strathcona is honoured throughout the length and breadth of Britain and 'Greater Britain,' and has an indelible record in golden letters on the scroll of patriot Empire builders.

The union of Canada, from the Pacific to the Atlantic shores, depended on the trans-continental railway on which he had set his heart; and the impulse of Longfellow's lines, if not the words, was his inspiration in his every endeavour for union :—

Sail on, O Ship of State !
Sail on, O Union, strong and great !
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate ! . . .
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;

'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale.
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee—are all with thee ! ”

CHAPTER XXXI

THE MAKING OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

THE Company formed to make the Canadian Pacific Railway was assisted by the Government of Canada, during the premiership of Sir John Macdonald, to the extent of £5,000,000 and twenty-five million acres of land, in blocks alternating with Government blocks, along the railway, together with the free gift of all land required for stations and works. Further, the Company was promised that the railway should never be put under taxation, and that the length of seven hundred miles already laid down should be made over to them free of any charge. On the other hand the Government, in effect, said. 'If we do this to help you, you must promise on your part to have the railway completed in seven years' 'Yes,' replied the Company, 'we promise.'

The first thing was to discover the easiest and most useful route along which the railway should pass. An exploring party was sent out. After a survey of two years, they brought back their report, and a vigorous start was made in 1874. What these explorers had to endure in the higher regions from the intense cold may be imagined from the fact that they sometimes had to beat

one another with leather straps to keep the blood moving.

The first part of the track-laying was through the district where the new railway was sure to pay best—namely, from Lake Superior to Manitoba, the richest corn-growing country in the world. Here the difficulties were very serious, for the rocks of granite and flint were so solid that close upon three millions of money were spent in making the line running along the northern shore of Lake Superior, the cost of the dynamite used in blowing away the rocks amounting to nearly half a million pounds. Another trouble was the number of ‘muskegs,’ that is lakes concealed by a great thickness of soil which was not solid enough to carry a railway track. Such vast quantities of timber and other heavy matters had to be thrown in to make the road firm that the engineers began to think they had found a bottomless pit.

But not only did this part of the line ultimately prove the most profitable, but by travellers it was regarded as one of the most attractive parts of the journey, passing as it did for many miles amidst the romantic rocks and within sight of the sea-like expanse of Lake Superior, one of the mightiest of the world’s fresh-water lakes, stretching from east to west for over four hundred miles.

When the rocks by Lake Superior were passed, and the prairie reached, long stretches of the line were rapidly made. But however quickly constructed it was all well built and of the best materials; in fact, over the whole length a first-class permanent way was laid down. The railway reaches its highest level in what is known as the

Kicking Horse Pass across the Rocky Mountains, where there is a little station at the height of 5321 feet above sea-level.

Early on the morning of November 7, 1885, the track of railway begun from the Pacific Ocean side was very near to the track started on the eastern side of the continent; an hour or two later the last rail was laid, and from the Pacific to the Atlantic there stretched a line of metals bringing the vastness of Canada into the union that had been so long desired. All that remained to finish the work was the driving in of the last spike, and this was done by one of the Directors of the Company, known now and honoured all over the British Empire as Lord Strathcona.

It was at Craigellachie, a little place in British Columbia, that the interesting ceremony took place. In the presence of an assembly representative of Canada, after a few simple words of congratulation to promoters, to workers, and to the Dominion generally, Mr Donald A. Smith delivered with his hammer the historic blow which drove in the last spike in the link that brought Canada into union from ocean to ocean; and the sound of the clang had hardly died away before a telegram arrived from the Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, conveying to all concerned the congratulations of Queen Victoria on the completion of a national event which Her Majesty regarded as 'of great importance to the whole British Empire.'

Lord Lansdowne, speaking on the subject of the Canadian Pacific Railway soon after its opening, said :—'It is impossible to travel to the Western

Ocean without feelings of admiration for the courage, and I am almost tempted to say the audacity, both of those who first conceived and of those who have carried to a successful consummation this great national work. The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway stands alone in the history of great achievements in railway building.'

In Alexander Begg's *History of the North-West*, 1895, a fitting tribute has been paid to the prime mover in the gigantic undertaking. 'Although Sir Donald A. Smith has never occupied any more prominent position in the Canadian Pacific Railway Company than that of a simple Director (through his own desire), it is well known that his powerful hand was ever ready to encourage and aid in the great work. It was like the crowning act of his devotion to Canada and the North-West, therefore, when he drove the last spike on the Canadian Pacific Railway at Craigellachie.'

In 1886, a few months after the completion of the railway, Mr Smith received, as has already been mentioned, the honour of knighthood; and perhaps equally appreciated by one with his passionate admiration for the majesty of the Canadian heights was the honour paid him of giving the name of 'Sir Donald' to one of the mountains in the neighbourhood of the western extremity of the railway.

What the glory of the mountains of Canada was to him is recorded in an address delivered in 1887.

'Any one who has gone to Banff, and from one

of the lower plateaux has looked down upon the fall immediately beneath, a fall of eighty feet or more with a large volume of water; who has looked on the reaches of the Bow River, and on turning round has beheld the mountains towering heavenward, and not felt his soul elevated, not felt proud that all this is part of the Dominion, cannot be a true Canadian. Those who will travel westward will find that every inch of ground is a picture either of sublimity or of beauty, such as is not to be found elsewhere on this North American Continent.'

As an example of the developments brought about by the Canadian Pacific Railway it may be mentioned that prior to its construction the site of the present city of Vancouver was almost an untrodden forest; to-day, with its population of over one hundred thousand, and its grand, land-locked mountain sheltered harbour, Vancouver is counted among the gateways of the world. The Canadian Pacific Railway is the nearest route from England to China and Japan, to Australia and New Zealand; and by helping to make Canada from ocean to ocean a united nation it has forged one of the strongest of all the links in the chain that binds together the British Empire.

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CHAPTER XXXII

SIR DONALD SMITH'S PHILANTHROPY

FOR a few years before and after the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Donald Smith seldom appeared in the Dominion's political arena; but in his eager desire and activities for the advance of the country's welfare, and in the pushing forward of his own commercial enterprises, he showed all the old indefatigability that had shaped his career from the outset. At the time when the Knighthood of the Order of St Michael and St George was conferred upon him it was commonly known that he was numbered in the ranks of the world's millionaires—a success in whose fruits the community at large shared, for his beneficence in the cause of education and of the suffering poor grew in proportion to the increase of his wealth.

Montreal was the principal object, and is still the 'outward and visible sign' of Sir Donald's philanthropy. Together with his cousin, Lord Mount Stephen, already referred to as Mr George Stephen, he made a gift of one million dollars for the erection of a Free Hospital in commemoration



of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, in 1887; and a little later on, they jointly endowed a similar institution erected on the lower slopes of Mount Royal, that beautiful hill at whose feet the city of Montreal nestles. No nobler position for a hospital can well be imagined. 'Behind,' wrote one who was familiar with the scene and could realise all the charms of its aspect, 'rises the mountain terraced with lovely gardens; before it lie the squares and steeples, the glittering river; and beyond that the misty champaign, with here and there a domed mountain, and at intervals a tower or village marked by a breath of smoke, or the steeple of a parish church that flashes like a poniard in the sun.'

Not only the money of the generous donors, but their thoughts and their time were given for the good of the subjects of their beneficence; for both Sir Donald Smith and his cousin visited England to gather from the most famous surgeons of the day the best advice possible on the matter they had so deeply at heart. In 1893 the building was completed, and the citizens of Montreal naturally desired an opening ceremony in keeping with the importance of the occasion, and as an opportunity for the expression of local gratitude to the generous founders.

Sir Donald gave voice in keeping with his own character and that of his cousin, when he replied to the Committee who were anxious for a formal inauguration:—'I want no flourish of trumpets. Just open the doors when the building is ready, and let the patients come in.'

His long absence from the parliamentary scene, mainly on account of his strenuous endeavours for the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and of his social work in Montreal, was generally regretted in political circles, and by no one more than Sir John Macdonald, who by this time fully recognised that in Sir Donald Smith was impersonated the spirit of Canada's onward progress. In 1895, in response to widely expressed requests, he again entered the Dominion House of Commons, but as an independent member elected without opposition for the St Antoine division of Montreal.

It was generally agreed in Canadian political circles that during the whole of his career as a legislator he was never influenced by party bias. 'I am disposed,' he once said, 'to judge of measures more than of men. At the same time, if a government may have made some blunders I am not disposed to oppose them because of this. We know that success depends not upon absolute perfection, but that with individuals as with government the criterion of success is to be found not in faultlessness but in the making of the fewest mistakes.'

Sir Donald, although financially interested in the Hudson Bay Company as one of its largest shareholders, had ceased in 1874, when he was in his fifty-fourth year, to take any active part in its control; but his advice was ever at the service of the management, and he never failed to be present at the Annual Meeting in London. When Mr Eden Colville resigned the Governorship of the Company in 1889, public opinion made no

mistake in pointing to Sir Donald Smith as his successor. From the lowly position of apprentice clerk in the wilds of Labrador he had toiled with patient perseverance through seemingly hopeless difficulties and amidst privations often of the bitterest kind, to the highest position the Company had to offer, the rulership that was first held by Prince Rupert, and to which no servant starting from the ranks had ever before risen.

Thirty years Donald Smith had uncomplainingly spent in banishment amidst the frozen north, becoming a man of iron through his hard experiences in those dismal granite wastes held in fierce grip by the bonds of snow and ice. Amidst these solitudes he had married Isabella Sophia, daughter of Richard Hardisty, of Canada, the lady whose sympathy and devotion made her a helpmeet worthy of one who was to win distinction and fortune by the force of his strenuous purpose. Their only child, Margaret Charlotte, became the wife of Robert J. B. Howard, M.D., F.R.C.S., of McGill University, Montreal, and London University.


Sir Donald Smith, who had carved his way to the headship of the Company, and to a position of lasting renown in the annals of Canada, with no other weapons save his indomitable energy and resolution, was often called upon to speak before audiences of young men with their future open before them like blank pages waiting to be filled in by their own hands.

On one of these occasions, his own experiences inspiring him, he said :—‘Be content with your

lot, but always be fitting yourself for something better and something higher. Do not despise what you are. Be satisfied for the time, not grumbling and finding fault. If you want to get higher, to a better position, only cheerful perseverance will bring you there; grumbling will not help you an inch.

Your future really depends almost entirely upon yourself, and is what you like to make it; I would like to impress that fact upon you. Do the work yourself; don't wait for friends to use their influence on your behalf; don't depend on the help of others. Of course, opportunity is a great thing, and it comes to some men more frequently than to others. But there are very few it does not visit at one time or another, and if you are not ready for it, and are not prepared to welcome it that is your fault, and you are the loser. Apart from that which we call genius, I believe that one man is able to do as well as any other, provided the opportunity presents itself and he is blessed with good health.'

When Donald Smith emerged from the wilderness of Labrador to enter into the active life of Canada, he was little past middle age, his beard, black and wiry, and heavy black eyebrows giving him a stern and uncompromising appearance; while the snow tan—which is stronger than the tan of the sun—had made him dark as an Indian. But, in 1885, it was a man with snowy-white hair who drove the last spike into the cedar tie upon which the rails of the Canadian Pacific Railway met from east to west; the years of constant




struggle, of incessant labour and anxiety, had changed the black-bearded, sturdy man into a white-haired veteran. Yet since then considerably over a quarter of a century has elapsed, and, under the finger of death only lately did the wielder of that historic stroke cease to be a prominent and active figure in the promotion of Britain's Imperial interests.

CHAPTER XXXIII

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

IN 1891, Canada in particular and the whole of the British Empire in general, were the poorer by the death of Sir John Macdonald, the statesman who had used the entire force of his genius in shaping the destinies of the Dominion to beneficent ends. Political differences between Sir Donald Smith and the Conservative Premier had long since been forgotten; and for years the two had been linked together by the bonds of intimate and enthusiastic friendship. Speaking on the subject of the Pacific Railway finances that had caused the temporary estrangement and had overthrown Sir John Macdonald's government, Sir Donald said :—'One of the most pleasing things to me is that Sir John Macdonald himself told me, and in the most kindly way, that he could never have thought so well of me had I supported him on that occasion, I believe that in the latter days, and for several years before we lost him, I was as much in his confidence as any man inside or outside his Cabinet. I am not speaking of mere political matters; and when I say "in his confidence" I mean in his confidence as a friend.'



Montreal, the commercial capital of the Dominion, was the scene of Donald Smith's entrance into Canada in his youth; and from that time till the end of his life it held the chief place in his affections and his interests, and was the main recipient of his princely benefactions to the land of his adoption. It is a city to compel the admiration of the least imaginative. From the neighbouring height of Mount Royal you look upon a view of almost limitless expanse, and of singular nobility and simplicity. You stand high above an immense plain; the St Lawrence River, joined by the Ottawa near by, flows straight on through this plain; you seem to feel the might of its rush; you almost hear the roar of its gleaming and enormous rapids. The vast expanse of sky, the majestic pageantry of clouds, the clear sunlight all about and so far away, the generous wind of this pure Northern air—all of it touches the imagination with a sense of space and grandeur. Then the city at your feet contains but little to bemean this magnificence. It stretches for more than five miles along the river, and runs about two miles back over a series of terraces ascending the slope of Mount Royal. All about it lies the green plain; while the forest finds entrance into the streets and stretches its arms over the dwellings of men.

The fascination that Montreal exercised over the mind of Donald Smith was natural. From the earliest days of the colony it had been the starting point for the fur trader, the missionary, the explorer; and for over a century after being wrested from the French *régime* it preserved an after-glow

of romance in connection with the enterprises of the Hudson Bay Company. But the railroads and canals have at last banished the bark canoe, the Indian, the voyager, and the missionary, to more remote parts of the interior.

The growth of Montreal was at first slow, in consequence of disadvantages connected with the rivers and the climate. Navigation was difficult in summer and impossible in winter. No ocean vessels larger than 300 tons could reach the city formerly because of the shallows in one of the expansions of the St Lawrence; and the current along the city's river front was so strong that vessels used to lie below it for days awaiting a fair wind. Even steamboats of early times had to add many yokes of oxen to their power. Such obstructions naturally hindered the expansion of Montreal; and these difficulties were increased by the enforced closing of the port during the winter months, and by the impediments offered to inland navigation by the once impassable rapids of the St Lawrence and the Ottawa.

The chief elements of Montreal's trade were the importation of goods from Europe, the selling and the forwarding of them to western towns, the sending of supplies to the lumbermen of the Ottawa, the exportation of grain, and the fur trade. It was nearly all a carrying trade, and this was precisely what was most difficult in those early days. But these difficulties were at length conquered, and the active growth of Montreal dates from the years between 1850 and 1860, during which period the Grand Trunk Railway was constructed, with the Victoria Bridge crossing the river in a

length of 9184 feet, the St Lawrence system of canals was formed, the shallows below the city were deepened, and ocean steamship lines established. Such a number of commercial advantages rarely marks the history of a city during a period of but ten or fifteen years.

Montreal now possesses the enormous commercial advantage of standing both at the head of ocean navigation and at the beginning of inland navigation, being, in consequence, the most central port for importation, distribution, and exportation, the natural key of the St Lawrence highway to the centre of the continent. This was just the city, with the romance of its history, the majesty of its surroundings, and the records of its splendid and successful struggles against natural disadvantages, to inspire the imagination and the admiration of a Donald Smith; no wonder that to this commercial and financial centre of the Dominion went his benefactions and his untiring interests.

Canada is no niggard in regard to education; and upon all grades, from the Primary Schools up to the Universities, expends annually a sum of over £2,000,000. Crowning the educational system is the M'Gill University, founded in 1824, and open to persons of all religious denominations. Sir Donald Smith was Chancellor of the University at the time its famous Principal, Sir William Dawson died; and it is characteristic of the indefatigable nature of the man that, for the sole purpose of finding a fitting successor, the Chancellor crossed the Atlantic and spent the winter of 1895-6 in touring through England and Scotland.

'What we require in the principal of M'Gill,' said Sir Donald, 'is, first of all, administrative ability; and, secondly, a mind broad enough to embrace and understand all the interests existent in the University. It is not easy to find the right man to step into Sir William Dawson's shoes.'

'The story of that tour through Great Britain,' says Mr Beckles Willson in his fitting tribute to the successor ultimately chosen, 'would alone fill a chapter. Sir Donald visited in turn Oxford and Cambridge, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee, in search of a head for one of the most admirably appointed and bountifully equipped seats of learning in the world. For a long time the secret of his choice was kept, and it cannot be denied that when it became known he had offered the post to Dr William Paterson, Principal of Dundee, a man under forty, there was a slight feeling of disappointment. But Sir Donald Smith's judgment has not proved false, and to-day nowhere will it be disputed that in the present Principal of McGill University there is to be found a rare combination of scholastic zeal, mental equipment, and executive ability, upon which Canada and her leading school may well be congratulated.'

CHAPTER XXXIV

LORD STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL

IN 1896, the office of High Commissioner for Canada in London became vacant owing to Sir Charles Tupper's resignation of that post on his re-entry into the public life of Canada, where for a brief period he took the helm as Prime Minister of the Dominion. From time to time efforts had been made, but always in vain, to induce Sir Donald Smith to take ministerial rank in the Canadian Government. Although his views were clear and decided in the direction of the country's advancement, he had little liking for the game of politics, and was strongly averse to being fettered by the party obligations inseparable from a Minister's position. 'I have ever sought,' he once said, 'to free myself from mere partyism, while having a certain connection with public life.'

The suggestion that Sir Donald Smith should succeed Sir Charles Tupper as Canada's representative in London caught the popular fancy on both sides of the Atlantic, and when the appointment was offered and accepted a general and enthusiastic agreement with the choice was

expressed throughout Great Britain and Canada. Speaking at the time in reference to the new position he was about to fill, Sir Donald said :—

‘It was thought that perhaps my connection with public matters would enable me to be of some service to the country, particularly in relation to certain large questions in which both the Imperial and Canadian Governments are interested. I do not know yet to what extent I shall be able to serve the country in this regard, but I think I am a Canadian in spirit, and that what I shall do will be in the interests of the country as a whole and not of any party.’

When Sir Donald accepted the office of High Commissioner for Canada, he was a millionaire, and having reached the age of seventy-six in an eventful, useful, and most strenuous life, naturally might have desired to spend the rest of his days in freedom from the responsibilities of administration. But, with the zealous thoroughness characteristic of the man, he threw his whole energies into the duties of his High Commissionership in London; and, though no party claimed him, all parties were one in admiration of the ability he showed, both as a far-seeing and patriotic statesman, and as a shrewd, tactful business man, in the conduct of the affairs of the position he adorned.

An enormous capacity for work was a distinguishing feature of this slim gentleman with the white hair, penthouse brows, bright hazel eyes, and snowy beard. Though but a few years distant from centenarian dignity, his working day, which

included Saturday, began at nine a.m., and ended —when he had finished his day's work. Three or four years ago, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, President of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, addressing an Anglo-Canadian meeting, thus made reference to the High Commissioner's devotion to duty, and the quiet humour of the concluding words made swift appeal to the audience :—'You will be gratified to know that, yielding to the earnest entreaties of his physician, Sir Thomas Barlow, he has decided to relax his energies. He has succumbed to the united pressure of his medical man, his family, and his friends, and has been induced to promise to leave his office at 7.30 each evening, instead of at 7.45.'

On the other hand there is the story that one of his physicians once told him that there was no reason why he should not live to be a hundred if he went on working. That advice was scarcely necessary, for the one thing certain was that he would go on working as long as he retained health and strength.

In 1886, as we have already seen, Donald Smith was knighted by admission into the Order of St Michael and St George, and in 1896, the first year of his High Commissionership in London, he had the gratification of being summoned to Windsor to receive from Queen Victoria's own hands the greatly valued insignia of the Order. Further honour quickly followed, for, on June 22, 1897, it was announced, amidst a chorus of approval throughout the British Empire, that Sir Donald Smith, G.C.M.G., had been raised to the dignity of a peer of the realm.

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What title he would choose was for several months unknown. His purchase at the time of an estate at Glencoe in Argyllshire, the scene of the treacherous massacre of the Macdonalds in 1692, led a leading newspaper to assume that the new peer would choose the name of Glencoe for his title; and as, with his usual distaste for self-advertisement, he did not take the trouble to deny the statement, he was publicly referred to on several occasions as Lord Glencoe.

But among his friends who refused to be drawn into an error on the subject was the Marquis of Lorne (now Duke of Argyll), Governor-General of Canada, 1878-83, who at Dominion Day dinner in the year the peerage was conferred said:—‘He has not confided in me by what title to address him, I shall, however, make no mistake if I congratulate the High Commissioner and call him Lord High Commissioner for Canada.’

At last the title was gazetted as Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal of Glencoe, Argyllshire, and Montreal, Canada—‘Strathcona’ as a tribute to his native land, and ‘Mount Royal’ as a mark of his interest in Canada’s commercial capital; for Montreal is but the Norman-French form of ‘Mount Royal,’ the adjacent height which gives to the city both its name and its charm.

The arrangement of the new peer’s coat-of-arms was a triumph of ingenuity on the part of the Heralds’ College. Feudal devices and old-world romance could have no plan in any heraldic

picturing that was to be emblematic of a career shaped to great ends by nineteenth century grit, perseverance, untiring effort, and strong sagacity.

Its final settlement has thus been described :—

Arms.—*Gules* on a fesse *argent* between a demi-lion rampant in chief *or*, and a canoe of the host with four men paddling proper; in the bow a flag of the second, flowing to the dexter, inserted with the letters N. W. *Sable* in base. A hammer surmounted by a nail in saltire of the last.

Crest.—On a mount vert, a beaver eating into a maple tree proper. Then follows the motto, 'Perseverance.'

The appropriateness of the leading features in these arms is evident even to the unlearned in matters heraldic; for in them the story of Lord Strathcona's life is told in brief; and it has been well said of them that their mere recital sounds like a fur trading voyageur's song played upon a mediæval sackbut. The *sable* and the beaver typify the trade of the Hudson Bay Company; the canoe with its paddlers pictures the romance of Canada's labyrinthine water-ways so familiar to Donald Smith in his long and arduous journeys to bargain for furs with the Indians; the magic and fascination of the great North-West, connected with the most anxious and adventurous part of the new peer's career, are recalled by the initials 'N. W.'; and, needless to say, the hammer and the nail commemorate the historic stroke by which a golden nail was driven into a sleeper of cedar wood during the ceremony

of the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Public opinion was quick and enthusiastic in its recognition of Donald Smith's worthiness of the honours conferred upon him; and, from the time of his elevation to the peerage to the time of his death, Lord Strathcona, for his keen interest in matters affecting social and national welfare, maintained a high place in the regard and respect of the community. Few men outside the field of active politics have been the recipient of so many honours. The State admitted him as a Privy Councillor; Science recognised his services by electing him to a Fellowship of the Royal Society; the Universities of Cambridge, Aberdeen, and Glasgow conferred upon him the degree of Hon. LL.D.; and after being Lord Rector of Aberdeen University in 1899, he was appointed four years later Chancellor of that seat of learning.

The motto, PERSEVERANCE, chosen for his coat-of-arms was an apt one; for certainly the keystone of his life was Perseverance; not with the mere object of winning wealth and fame, but for the furtherance of what he conceived to be his duty. The greatness of his fame was the consequence of his stoical indifference to hardship and trouble when following duty's call; and the English-speaking world knows that among the millionaires of the day there were few who equalled him in the wise application of their wealth for philanthropic purposes.

Indeed, the records of his life from 1886 to 1896 in Canada, and since that date both in Canada and

Great Britain, were rich in a series of splendid gifts amounting to millions of money. On the other side of the Atlantic his liberality was exercised principally in aid of colleges and hospitals. At the coronation of King Edward Lord Strathcona gave a magnificent donation to His late Majesty's Hospital Fund, and his wife was equally generous in her contribution to the fund for the unemployed. An act that went straight to the heart of the Empire was his gift to the Imperial force of the Strathcona Horse Company, a body of nearly seven hundred men enrolled in Western Canada, for service in the Boer War.

Lord Strathcona had followed with the keenest interest the course of events in this long-drawn-out, arduous, and anxious struggle for supremacy in South Africa; and he was among the first to realise that the machine-like precision of regimental routine would fare badly against the system of individuality upon which the Boer force was built; that in those wild, rugged, barren stretches, the qualities of good marksmanship and unwearied agility in the saddle that had won so many successes for the Boers should be opposed by troops similarly trained. Things were at their darkest when Lord Strathcona offered to Queen Victoria and the Empire the services of a body of Canadian rough-riders to be sent to South Africa, equipped and maintained at his own expense, the whole cost amounting to about £250,000.

This generous and patriotic proposal was at once accepted, and when the first contingent embarked

they were addressed by Lord Strathcona in a few simple and informal words :—

‘I know that you are fit for the work that lies before you, and that in everything you do you will be a credit to Canada. I know you will do your duty, and you can do no more. God speed you and give you a safe return.’

‘Every man of us,’ said one of the troopers some time afterwards, ‘felt moved almost to tears. We knew that the old man believed in us, and we silently swore to be worthy of his trust.’

The Canadians—or Lord Strathcona’s Horse, as they were generally known—chanced to have their first brush with the enemy on Dominion Day, and with the loss of one man they made several prisoners. For some reason, not fully understood, the Canadian rough-riders were not used in action as often as they so ardently desired. But they were frequently employed, as their many fatalities testify; and even the enemy had generous praise to give to those whom they complimented by styling them ‘British Boers.’

Of more importance than the success of Strathcona’s Horse in the field, interesting though that is, must be counted the Imperial value, dear to the founder’s heart, of an Empire united in trouble as well as in prosperity; so knit together by the bonds and the principles of commonwealth that a trouble to a part shall be accepted as a responsibility by the whole. Actuated by these Imperial instincts, Lord Strathcona sent his rough-riders to South Africa on a mission of Empire-welding, the significance of which was instantly hailed as a new and

inspiring movement in the direction of peace and security.

No one who knew Lord Strathcona was surprised that as High Commissioner for Canada in London he was from the first, and continued to be, an unqualified success. He was a Canadian in sympathy and by virtue of residence for more than half a century. He was shrewd and sagacious, and in all business matters clear and precise; his industry was amazing, as was also his capacity to grasp details and to apply them properly; by no living man was he surpassed for knowledge of Canada and her people, her productions and her almost infinite possibilities; between him and the Canadians there was a strong link of sympathy, for he believed in them and they in him; and the prosperity of the Dominion was the absorbing desire of his life.

Canadian tributes to his success were enthusiastic and many. Said one authority, 'It is not exceeding the bonds of simple exactitude to say that Lord Strathcona has proved, merely from a commercial and manufacturing standpoint, the most valuable High Commissioner Canada has ever had. His reports are marvels of conciseness and plain practical common sense. None of his predecessors were able to bring to a task the trained judgment and ripened experience of Lord Strathcona, or to command that attention in commercial circles to which his financial eminence entitles him.'

From another quarter appeared the following: 'Splendid as have been his benefactions, their demand on our gratitude has been eclipsed by the

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personal devotion by Lord Strathcona of his time, his talents, his influence, his social prestige to whatever gave promise of fostering the development, the prosperity, and the well-being of Canada and Canadians.'

In 1898—two years after Lord Strathcona's appointment to the High Commissionership—Lord Aberdeen's term of office as Governor-General of Canada expired, and public opinion in Canada clamoured that the new peer, the Donald Smith of their love and reverence, should be chosen for the high post. 'The Governor-Generalship,' argued one of the most influential of Canadian newspapers, 'is the Imperial office most immediately under the eye of our people; and to seat a Canadian there would be as conspicuous a recognition of this colonial right to share in Imperial honours as could be given to the five millions dwelling in this part of the Empire.'

Lord Strathcona, however, without a moment's hesitation, declared that not only would he refuse to accept the honour if offered to him but that he was entirely opposed, on Imperial principles, to the post being filled by a Canadian. The Governor-Generalship was the 'outward and visible sign' of the link between Great Britain and Canada; and should be fashioned, not at any Canadian forge for local reasons, but for Imperial considerations at the Empire's centre.

It was in a large measure owing to the advice of Lord Strathcona that the appointment was offered to the Marquis of Lorne (now Duke of Argyll), whose marriage with the Princess Louise, fourth

daughter of Queen Victoria, made the acceptance one of Imperial significance. The sense and genius of the Marquis of Lorne, together with the charm of his royal and gracious wife, gave to the Governor-Generalship the dignity that Lord Strathcona wished for the high office of Representative of the British Government in the splendid domain of the Canadian Colony.

CHAPTER XXXV

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

NEARLY two years passed before the voice of the new peer was heard in the House of Lords. Then, on June 28, 1898, Lord Strathcona rose to give expression to a long-felt Colonial grievance over the curious anomaly—so utterly opposed to the spirit of a true Imperial Bond of Union—by which a marriage with a deceased wife's sister, while legal in the Colonies, was illegal in the United Kingdom.

The scene was worthy of the speaker when Lord Strathcona rose in the gilded Chamber to introduce his Bill to make legal in the United Kingdom all marriages legally contracted in the Colonies. The floor of the House was crowded as it is only on rare occasions by the aristocracy of the Empire, and among the occupants of the cross-benches was the Heir to the Throne; while from the galleries flashed the gems and insignia of a brilliant array of peeresses, and of ambassadors and other distinguished representatives from almost every nation under the sun. From the Lower House party leaders hurried in interested groups to listen to the voice of the Empire-welder, who in

the cause of Imperial unity was to appeal to the Parliament of the United Kingdom to end the social disunion that on a matter of home-life set the Mother Country apart from her Children Colonies.

Seldom, if ever, has a new peer been called upon to address for the first time so splendid an assembly—members and visitors forming a concentration of the Empire's glory—and it was with hesitation and with slow utterance that Lord Strathcona opened what was to him an Imperial theme.

'My lords,' he began, 'I have very great diffidence in rising to address you at this time. It is the first occasion on which I have had the privilege of addressing you as a Member of this House. Notwithstanding, it is also with very great confidence that I come before you, my lords, for I know that you will have much consideration for me in the position I occupy.'

Then, gathering confidence as in clear terms he explained the provisions of his Bill, he proceeded to plead his cause with a simple and touching sincerity that was in itself oratory, and with a fervent expression of patriotism that profoundly impressed his hearers :—

'Why should the children of such marriages when they come home bear a mark of disgrace? Why should they be legitimate in one part of the Empire and illegitimate in another, when the marriage is perfectly legal, under laws passed by

Colonial Parliaments and assented to by the Empire's sovereign? Is this a creditable state of things in our present civilisation? For some time past the different parts of the Empire have been drawn close together. The troops of the Colonies have fought shoulder to shoulder with those of the Motherland. Her Majesty's subjects in the Colonies have shared in the joys and in the sorrows of their Motherland. Glad people from every part of the world where the British flag is paramount came last year to London to do honour to their beloved Sovereign. . . . We are all doing our best to develop the Empire of which we are so proud, and to strengthen the ties which bind us together, and the removal of this grievance cannot fail to further consolidate the union.

'Let me, therefore, appeal to your lordships to express your approval of this measure, which seeks to remove what is regarded as a grave anomaly in the Colonies, to remove a restriction which operates against one of their most sacred rights, and to free the children of your colonial brethren, who contract perfectly legal marriages, from the stigma which now attaches to them when they come to their Motherland. I may also be permitted to address a word to the most reverend and the right reverend lords in this House. It is that the clergy both of the Established Church, of the other denominations, and of the Catholic Church in Canada, and I believe also in the other Colonies, have accepted this Bill, and unquestionably many of them approve of it.

'I would now, my lords, in closing, desire to say

that I stand here—it is by the gracious will of the Sovereign that I have the privilege—as a Colonist, as one of those coming from the Colonies. Every man in the Colonies looks upon himself as being as much of an Englishman as if he were born within the bounds of the United Kingdom. He glories in the name of an Englishman, and he has all the aspirations that you and all who are loyal to the Empire have. This measure affects—and affects very gravely—many in the Colonies, from the Ministers of the Crown to the artisan, and many of them the most worthy, the most loyal. Nay, I would withdraw this last expression, “the most loyal.” Throughout the Dominion of Canada—indeed, my lords, throughout all the Colonies—there is now but one standard, one measure of loyalty. Such being the case; and feeling as they do that they are, equally with those in this country, members of the great Empire to which we all belong, I am confident that you, my lords, will on this occasion send those who are in the position I have referred to a message of goodwill, an assurance that you are desirous of doing full justice to them.’

The Bill ultimately passed the House of Lords by a majority of eighty-three, but not being taken up by the Government it dropped for the time from the Parliamentary arena. Two years later, Lord Strathcona again brought his Bill before the Lords, and on May 28, 1900, in the presence of an audience as brilliant as on the first occasion, he thus forcibly and eloquently pleaded :—

'This measure has not been sprung upon Parliament suddenly. It is in no sense a movement of impulse. For twenty-four years the Colonies have been pressing the matter upon the attention of the Imperial authorities. It affects, my lords, the most important and sacred of all contracts, and affects communities not less attached to the Christian religion than those of the Mother Country. . . .

'The present time seems to me a singularly appropriate one for such action on the part of your lordships as I have ventured to recommend. For the last few years there has been a great awakening of Imperial sentiment. The different parts of the Empire have vied with one another in demonstrating their loyalty to the Crown and to the Empire. They have shown not only the desire, but the determination, to share both in its joys and in its troubles, and we have at the present time in South Africa an object-lesson to the world of the practical unity of the different parts of the British Empire, which has awakened an enthusiasm never experienced before both in the Motherland and in every part of the world where the British flag flies.

'Your favourable decision would be regarded in some parts of the Empire as a message of goodwill to our fellow-subjects, who are so closely connected with us by common ancestry, by common patriotism, by common love for the Empire to which we are all proud to belong, and by common loyalty and veneration for our gracious Sovereign.'

The Bill was this time carried by a majority of eighty-five, those voting in its favour including the Prince of Wales (His late Majesty, Edward VII.), the Duke of York (His Majesty King George V.), and the Duke of Connaught. But again the Government refused to entertain the matter in the House of Commons; and thus neglected it remained until the twentieth century, when the battle was refought and the victory gained.

CHAPTER XXXVI

APPROACHING THE CENTURY

IN 1910, having reached the age of ninety, Lord Strathcona was still in the possession of mental and bodily activity, hale and hearty, intellectually alert, keenly responsive to the call of any duty connected with his position as High Commissioner for Canada in London. In 1912 he was laid low for some weeks by a severe attack of influenza; and when, as a consequence of such an illness upon a man of his advanced age the worst was feared, a thrill of surprise and relief went through the English-speaking world to hear of him, after the issue of a grave bulletin by his physician, in connection with a public function in London, which was speedily followed by a journey to Liverpool to attend a ceremony of Canadian interest.

'Providence,' he once cheerily said, 'has blessed me with a good constitution. I have had plenty of work to do all my life, and there is no doubt that that is the best thing for keeping a man well and strong; for in the very effort to do that work thoroughly well, he must cut off any habits and practices that tend to weaken him and render him unfit for the best service.'

For his princeliness as a host Lord Strathcona

was long noted in Anglo-Canadian circles, as all know who were welcomed by him at his homes in London, at Glencoe, or at Colonsay in Scotland, at Knebworth Park in Hertfordshire, or at Debden Hall in Essex, at Norway House in Nova Scotia, at Silver Heights, Winnipeg, or at 1157 Dorchester Street, Montreal. From the time of his reception of Lord Dufferin in the early seventies, each Governor-General of Canada was welcomed by him at Montreal with the magnificence of a state ceremony; and when the Prince and Princess of Wales (now King George and Queen Mary) paid their memorable visit to Canada, it was under Lord Strathcona's roof they lived during the whole of their stay in Montreal.

The collecting of art treasures was for many years Lord Strathcona's favourite hobby, and at his Montreal house are stored most of his treasures, which include paintings by Raphael, Titian, Turner, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Constable, Millais, and other masters, old and modern.

Concerning his picture buying, a characteristic story is told. His purchase of Jules Breton's well-known picture, 'The First Communion,' made a sensation in the art world, for the price paid was the highest that had ever been given up to that time for any work, except for those by the greatest of the old masters. In this purchase Lord Strathcona had as his competitor the agent of Mr James J. Hill, the famous Canadian railway magnate, and the bidding between the two was of a lively description.

After the picture had become the property of Lord Strathcona, at a price about double what

was expected, he was visited by his rival, who expressed regret at having failed to secure the picture. Mr Hill explained that he had wanted it as a present to his wife, and offered to give Lord Strathcona £1000 more than the price he had paid for it. Lord Strathcona, however, refused the offer. But a few days later the picture was sent to Mr Hill's London address, with a brief note expressing the hope that Mrs Hill would accept it as a gift. Mr and Mrs Hill, under the circumstances, declined to allow Lord Strathcona to make this sacrifice, and the picture still remains in the possession of its purchaser.

Throughout all his career, Imperialism was the direction in which Lord Strathcona's patriotism impelled him, but it was an Imperialism based on sound, sane, and sober principles, modified by business sagacity, and guided by the tact and wisdom of the practical, far-seeing statesman. Whither Lord Strathcona's Imperialism led him is best shown in his own address delivered in December, 1900, as Lord Rector of Aberdeen University.

'We have glanced,' he said to the undergraduates, as he neared the end of his address, 'at some of the milestones along the road which has led to the cross-roads we are now facing, and the question before us is, Which of them must be taken? Shall it be the one which points to the maintenance of the existing order of things, or the other which will lead to closer unity for Imperial purposes, for commercial purposes, and for defence? There seems to be a general feeling in favour of the latter, which will assure the different

parts of the Empire full liberty of self-government, while giving them a voice in Imperial policy, the desire for which is becoming stronger every year. There are some who think that the solution of the problem is to be found in the representation of Canada and the Colonies in the Imperial Parliament. I am not one of those who share that view, at any rate until a truly Imperial Parliament to deal with Imperial affairs can be established.

'In times to come it is within the bounds of possibility that there may be local Parliaments to deal with local affairs in England, Scotland, and Ireland; and we may also then have a Parliament with representatives from the different parts of the Empire which will be Imperial in name and in its work. We are approaching a period when all parts of the Empire will seek to have a voice in the foreign policy and in other subjects affecting the well-being of the community in general. That some way must be found of meeting the aspirations of the Colonies does not admit of doubt.

'I have made some reference to the question of an Imperial Parliament. That may be the ultimate solution, or it may not. But in the meantime the constitution of an Imperial Council in conjunction with the Colonial Office, consisting in representatives of the Imperial Government and of the Colonies, has been mentioned as a preliminary step, even if the Council were only consultative at the commencement.'

Such were the aspirations towards an Imperial union so ardently cherished by Lord Strathcona as a loyal son of the Empire, and a staunch and enthusiastic Canadian. In the possibilities, the

mightiness, the widely extended influence, the provision of security and mutual advantage afforded by a consolidated Empire, he had a profound belief; and he worked long and steadfastly for the accomplishment of a tangible and operative bond of union between the Mother Country and her world-wide Colonies and Dependencies.

The Gospel of Union he preached with unfaltering energy to the British Empire he made heard in his own Canada. His whole-heartedness and never-flagging devotion helped in the making of the splendid Dominion extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and northwards from the great rivers and lakes to the ice-bound regions of the Arctic world. Largely owing to his indefatigable endeavour the Canadian Pacific Railway was brought to a completion; and with it all Canada was linked into one Dominion, tied by indissoluble bonds of sympathy, affection, veneration, and common interests.

At the beginning of October, 1913, Lord Strathcona left his home at Glencoe for the last time. In London he fell ill. Even his iron constitution gave way, and on 21st January, the half-masted flags of the nation bore witness to the grief with which was regarded the passing of a noble servant of the Empire, a true patriot, a man among men.

He had seen Canada, for whose union he had striven so keenly and so steadfastly, moving forwards by leaps and bounds to an amazing and abiding prosperity. For him was the reward of seeing the wilderness of Rupert's Land changed into

the smiling fertility of the three flourishing Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta; of a city like Vancouver, in British Columbia, with its stately buildings and teeming wharves and population of close upon 150,000, rising, as if by the touch of an enchanter's wand, from a solitary place where, a quarter of a century ago, no human being had made a settlement.

Yet, what has been done in Canada was to Lord Strathcona but the beginning of promise; the fifteen millions of highly fertile acres under cultivation were to him but the earnest of a future when the Motherland would have sent out her children to cultivate the two hundred millions of acres into which no plough has ever cut furrows. What Canada's future will be was to Lord Strathcona an amazing development of Imperial possibilities; and to him her people of the time that is and will be were :—

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new;
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

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